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THE MAPLESON MEMOIRS

VOL. I.

4



J. A. Mapleson

THE MAPLESON MEMOIRS

1848-1888

IN TWO VOLUMES

WITH PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR

VOL I

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PREFACE.

HAVING been repeatedly urged by numerous friends on both sides of the Atlantic to set forth a few of the difficulties attending the career of an *impresario*, who, during the last thirty years, has fought many operatic battles, I have undertaken the task, having at the present moment for the first time in my recollection a few weeks of comparative repose before again renewing my lyrical campaigns.

I willingly sat down to the work, trusting that an account of the few partial defeats and the many brilliant victories incident to my life may be found interesting.

This being my first appearance as an author, I am naturally unpractised in the artifices of style familiar to more experienced hands.

Some of my plain statements of facts will not, I fear, be fully appreciated by the personages to whom they refer; and in case they should feel offended by my frankness, I ask their pardon beforehand, convinced that they will readily accord it.

J. H. MAPLESON.

Junior Carlton Club,

21st September, 1883.

1927
504 20
Berth Dup.

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CHAPTER I.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE CAREER OF IMPRESARIO—MY
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BEFORE beginning my thirty years' career as an operatic manager, I had already had a large and varied experience of music in the character of student, critic, violinist, vocalist, composer, concert director, and musical agent. At the age of fourteen I entered the Royal Academy of Music, where the Principal was at that time Cipriani Potter. I took as my first study the violin, my professor being Watson, under whom I made good progress. Harmony I studied under Lucas. My compositions are limited to two pianoforte pieces and a song, which I published soon after leaving the Academy, where I remained about two years.

I made my first public appearance among the first violins at Her Majesty's Theatre, where, during

the Jenny Lind seasons of 1848 and a portion of 1849, I played from the same desk as Remenyi, the famous Hungarian violinist. Remenyi, too, shared my rooms, and often kept me up at night by his loud and passionate declamations on the subject of Hungarian independence, and of liberty generally. He had taken part in the revolutionary movement of 1848, and on its collapse had fled for his life to foreign parts. Fortunately, he had his violin to depend upon; and it was in London, I believe, that he first turned his remarkable talent to practical and pecuniary account.

Mr. [afterwards Sir Michael] Costa had left Her Majesty's Theatre two years previously to take part in establishing the Royal Italian Opera at Covent Garden, and the new conductor at Her Majesty's Theatre was our eminent composer M. W. Balfe. It had already occurred to me to quit the comparative obscurity of the orchestra for a brilliant position on the stage; and this idea was encouraged by Balfe, who, during the intervals of operative business, gave me singing lessons. I also received instruction from Gardoni, the tenor, and Belletti, the baritone. As I had a tenor voice, Gardoni's lessons were particularly useful to me; and I was led to believe by each of my distinguished professors that I had in me the making of a primo tenore.

Long before I had completed my studies as a vocalist, an opportunity, indeed a necessity, for

making my first appearance as a singer presented itself. Not to remain idle during the long months separating one opera season from another, I took out in the English Provinces in 1849 a company in which were included Sontag, Calzolari, Belletti, Lablache, and the famous pianist Thalberg. On one occasion, after giving a concert at Salisbury, the whole party paid a visit to Stonehenge, where Sontag sang "Casta diva," and Lablache a portion of Oroveso's solo music among the Druidical remains, so suggestive of the opera of *Norma*. I have now before me a handsome little clock which Madame Sontag presented to me at the end of the tour. It is inscribed: "To J. H. Mapleson from Madame Sontag (Countess Rossi)." I may mention in connection with this charming vocalist, whose good nature and good temper were on a par with her talent, a peculiarity which will perhaps astonish some of the concert singers of the present day. Instead of avoiding, according to the modern practice, the task of either beginning or ending a concert, she was ready and even anxious to sing both the first piece and the last. "If I do not begin the concert people will not come in time," she would say; "and if I do not end it they will go away before it is over."

In the autumn of 1850 I took on tour a company which included Roger and Madame Viardot, the famous representatives of "John of Leyden" and "Fidès" in *Le Prophète*. Meyerbeer was in constant

•

correspondence with them. To avoid the expense of postage, he used to send his music written on such fine paper that to be able to read it with any ease it was necessary to place it on a back-ground of ordinary writing paper.

In a subsequent tour my leading tenor was one night for some reason or other not forthcoming. There was no one to replace him, and as I was myself a tenor I plunged boldly into the gap. I sang with success, but it occurred to me even as I was singing that I had need of further instruction. On my return to London I called on Sims Reeves, and sang to him; when he at once recommended me to go to Milan, and place myself under Signor Mazzucato, director and principal professor of singing at the celebrated Conservatorio. Reeves was kind enough to give me a letter to Mazzucato, under whom he had himself studied, with results which need not here be set forth.

Before taking farewell of England in order to go through a three years' course of training in Italy I did a little work as musical critic for a journal called the *Atlas*, which for years past has ceased to exist, but which, at the time I speak of, enjoyed a good reputation, especially in connection with literary and artistic matters. The proprietor, and ostensible editor, was a well-known journalist, Mr. George Francis, author of "The Orators of the Age," a series of papers which made some stir when, before appearing in book-form, they were

published in the pages of *Frazer's Magazine*. Mr. Francis had, I believe, gained his experience of our British orators in the gallery of the House of Commons, where he was for many years one of the principal reporters of the *Times* staff. Mr. Francis was also a brilliant foreign correspondent, and it afterwards became a speciality of his to assist and preside at the birth of new journals. His fee as accoucheur on these occasions was, I believe, a considerable one. After a time nothing would satisfy him but to have a paper of his own. He bought the *Atlas*, and while entrusting most of the editorial work to a Mr. Joyce, who was my immediate chief, appropriated to himself all free admissions that reached the office. Accordingly, when it became my duty to write an account of the first production of *Le Prophète* at the Royal Italian Opera, I received instructions from my editor about sending in "copy," but was not furnished with a stall. I was to manage, somehow or other, to hear the opera, and I was in any case to send in a notice of it. I endeavoured to buy a ticket, but everything was sold.

In my despair I chanced to meet the American philanthropist, Mr George Peabody, well known by his charitable deeds, and who hastened on this occasion to perform a good work towards me. He assured me that the difficulty which troubled me was not so great as I imagined. It was now late in the afternoon. The performance was to take

place that evening, and Mr. Peabody suggested that first of all the best thing I could do was to dine with him at the "Hummums." Thence, after finishing a bottle of excellent port, we walked quietly to the gallery entrance of the opera—at that time under the piazza, next door to the Bedford Hotel—bought our tickets, and found places in the very front row.

Soon, however, I was to start for Milan, where, studying constantly with Professor Mazzucato, I spent nearly three years. Then an engagement was offered to me at Lodi, where I was to make my first appearance on any stage as "Carlo" in *Linda di Chamouni*.

Manners and customs at the Lodi Opera-house were at that time rather peculiar. Refreshments of all kinds used to be served in the audience department between the acts. Every box was furnished with a little kitchen for cooking macaroni, baking or frying pastry, and so on. The wine of the country was drunk freely, not out of glasses, but in classical fashion from bowls. Attired in the brilliant uniform of my part I was in the middle of the pit draining one of these bowls, when suddenly the signal was given for the rising of the curtain. All seemed lost. But I hurried back to the stage, and fortunately was not very late for my entry.

My success in Lodi was such that I was offered four pounds a month to sing at Verona. Here my first duty was to replace Bettini (not the husband of

Madame Trebelli Bettini, but the dramatic tenor of that name) in the important part of "Manrico." *Il Trovatore* had but lately been brought out, and was then in the first period of its success. I had never heard the work, but the tenor part had been sent to me, and I had to master it in four days, my final study being made in the diligence, with no musical instrument to aid me except a tuning-fork. I studied the part all day and, by the light of a candle, all night, and before I reached Verona knew it perfectly. The prima donna of the cast was Mdle. Lotti, afterwards known in London and elsewhere as Madame Lotti Della Santa, the second part of her name being derived from her husband, Signor Della Santa, who, during my stay at Verona, played the part of the "Count di Luna" to the "Leonora" of his future wife. Bettini married a sister o. Max Maretzek, afterwards well known as conductor and impresario in the United States. I made a sufficiently good impression at Verona to cause Signor Bettini, who on my arrival was seriously ill, to get perfectly well after I had made but two appearances.

Returning to London early in 1854, I gave a grand concert with the following eminent artists:—Mdme. Clara Novello, Miss Dolby, Mr. Sims Reeves, Herr Formes, and Mdme. Arabella Goddard. I also took part in it. My throat, however, had become affected, and after I had been very thoroughly operated upon by Dr.

Billing, I found myself deprived alike of tonsils, uvula, and voice.

My path had now been marked out for me. For the future I might be a musical agent, a concert director, or an impresario ; but not a vocalist.

In 1855 the two principal members of the touring party I was directing were Miss Hayes and Mdm. Gassier.

In the year 1856 I started a musical agency in the Haymarket, the first established in London. Both Mr. Lumley and Mr. Gye applied to me for singers. As I was well known in Italy, numbers of artists inscribed their names on my books. I did a good business, and was making a large income. My business relations bound me more particularly to Mr. Lumley, the manager of Her Majesty's Theatre, and he had enough confidence in me to entrust me with the work of adapting Balfe's *Bohemian Girl* to the Italian stage. This was about the time of the gala performances in honour of the marriage of the Crown Prince of Prussia (late Emperor of Germany) to the Princess Victoria of England, when a number of Shakespearian representations were given at Her Majesty's Theatre, with Mr. Phelps in the principal parts.

No Italian version of Balfe's work existed previously, and I received for mine the sum of £50. Operatic translations are often severely judged, but it is no easy matter to adapt the words of a song so that, while other more obvious requirements are

duly fulfilled, the accents shall fall in exact accordance with the composer's music.

In the early part of this year (1858) the late E. T. Smith, then lessee of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, called upon me at my office, in the Haymarket, requesting me to aid him in the formation of an Italian Opera Company, which he wished to secure for his theatre during the coming summer months. He had so many enterprises on hand that he asked me to undertake the superintendence and management of the Italian Opera season he had in view. I explained to him that the business I was then carrying on required all my care and attention, and that it was far more profitable than any interest he could offer me in his contemplated enterprise.

But won over by his solicitations, and influenced by my love of the divine art, I consented, and found myself at once drawn into the artistic vortex. My knowledge and experience fitted me well enough for the conduct of the undertaking, which, however, I considered rather a hazardous one.

On the one hand would be ranged against me Her Majesty's Theatre, under the late Mr. Lumley's able management, with such artists as Piccolomini, Alboni, Giuglini, and the new and successful Thérèse Titiens, who had already fully captured London; and on the other hand the Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden, newly rebuilt, under the skilful direction of Mr. Gye, with Grisi, Mario, Costa, and a host of celebrities. I felt the great

responsibility of the position I had undertaken. I, however, set to work and engaged the services of Salvini-Donatelli, Viardot, Persiani, Naudin, Badiali, Marini, Rovere, Charles Braham and other tried artists.

My first object was to secure an able conductor. I discovered Signor Vianesi (afterwards of the Royal Italian Opera, and now of the Grand Opera, Paris), and appointed him to the post at a salary of £8 a month. Much trouble was experienced in forming an efficient orchestra on account of the two great Italian Operas, and still more in obtaining a stage military band. This latter difficulty I surmounted when one day in Leicester Square I lighted upon a very excellent one composed of itinerant Italian musicians performing in the open street.

The season opened in due course, and the public gave ample support to the undertaking. I will not fatigue the reader by entering into details with respect to that season, which I began five days before the opening of the new Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden, just rebuilt, in order that the singers might at all events give two public performances before the whole attention of the town would be centred on the new theatre.

On one occasion I encountered a slight difficulty, when the opera of *La Traviata* had, in consequence of the illness of one of the singers, to be suddenly substituted for the work originally announced. It

was already half-past seven o'clock at night, and we were without a stage band.

I sent the call-boy down all the likely thoroughfares where my Italian wanderers might be playing, and I myself started to look for them in another direction. I ultimately traced them to a small restaurant in Soho, where they were eating macaroni. I gave them orders to come on immediately to the theatre to perform behind the scenes in *La Traviata*, and hurried back to the theatre. On arriving there I found the call-boy had brought another street band, which now refused to quit the stage. At one time things looked very serious, as the Italians of the opposing bands, with their stilettos drawn, vowed vengeance on one another. Ultimately all was satisfactorily arranged.

The interest of this first season was kept up until its close, in the latter part of July. The only other incident here worth mentioning was the performance, on the 17th July, of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* with the following powerful cast:—

| | | | | |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-------------------------|
| " Donna Anna " | ... | ... | ... | Madame Pauline Viardot. |
| " Donna Elvira " | ... | ... | ... | Madame Rudersdorff. |
| " Zerlina " | ... | ... | ... | Madame Persiani. |
| " Don Giovanni " | ... | ... | ... | Signor Badiali. |
| " Leporello " | ... | ... | ... | Signor Rovere. |
| " Commendatore " | ... | ... | ... | Signor Marini. |
| " Masetto " | ... | ... | ... | Signor Insom. |
| " Ottavio " | ... | ... | ... | Signor Naudin. |

The evening prior to its performance I met Mr. E. T. Smith, who horrified me by saying that in

order to "strengthen up the bill," it being his benefit, he had added *The Waterman*, in which Charles Braham would play "Tom Tug," and moreover, introduce into the piece a new song dedicated by Mr. E. T. Smith to the Metropolitan Board of Works, who, said Smith, with a knowing wink, were "a most useful body."

I paid no attention to this at the time, thinking it was only a joke; but on looking at the *Times* newspaper on the day of the performance, I found that the announcement, as communicated to me by Mr. E. T. Smith, had really been made. The performance, too, of the *Waterman*, with the introduced song, was really given.

I waited with interest to see what the newspapers would say as to my closing representation. Only one paper mentioned the performance; and it confined itself to stating that *Don Giovanni* had been played the previous evening "by a body of singers whose united ages amounted to nearly 500 years."

Mr. E. T. Smith, the manager, had made money by our season; and he remunerated me very handsomely for my labours. In the meantime, notwithstanding the phenomenal success of Mdlle. Titiens at Her Majesty's Theatre, Mr. Lumley's difficulties had been constantly increasing; and Her Majesty's Theatre now closed, never to open again under his management.

CHAPTER II.

INJUNCTION AGAINST THE BIRDS ON THE TREES—DRURY LANE SEASON OF 1859—DÉBUTS OF VICTOIRE BALFE, MONGINI, AND GUARDUCCI—MY CONTRALTO MARRIES A DUKE—THE DUKE AND DUCHESS AT NAPLES.

Efforts were now made to obtain the lease of Her Majesty's theatre, but it was so entangled with legal difficulties that it was resolved, on my advice to remain another year at Drury Lane. I therefore set to work to secure a very powerful company for the London season of 1859.

During the latter part of 1858 the baritone Graziani had called repeatedly upon me, stating that as Mr. Gye had not renewed his engagement, and as there were some arrears outstanding, he was very desirous that I should engage him for the forthcoming season. After lengthy negotiations, some time during the month of March, 1859, I signed with him, and added him to the list of artists in the official programme.

On the prospectus being issued, law proceedings

were immediately commenced by Mr. Gye, who asked for an injunction to restrain Graziani from appearing at Drury Lane.

Application was made before Vice-Chancellor Wood, and the most eminent counsel were engaged on both sides. Mr. Gye retained Rolt, Giffard, Martindale, etc., whilst Mr. E. T. Smith was represented by Sir Hugh Cairns, Hawkins, Swanstone, Serjeant Ballantine, Cottrell, Daniel, &c. The case was heard on the 11th and 12th May, 1859, when an injunction was granted. At this I felt somewhat astonished, inasmuch as Graziani's engagement had never been renewed by Mr. Gye, although in a period of more than eight months the eminent baritone had made more than a dozen applications for a renewal; neither had his salary been paid him.

I have repeatedly failed to obtain injunctions against my singers, both here and in America, though the engagements which they had broken were in every respect perfectly in order. I recollect a case in which one of my principal singers was announced to appear at the Crystal Palace in a concert, notwithstanding a written engagement whereby he contracted that I should have his exclusive services, and that he would sing nowhere without my written consent. No salary was owing to him, and I felt perfectly sure of obtaining an injunction, for which I duly applied, in order to restrain him from committing the contemplated breach of engagement.

A formal injunction was, in fact, granted ; but the case was immediately afterwards brought before the Lords Justices for a full hearing. As I was very much occupied at the theatre with rehearsals, and felt sure the injunction would be confirmed, and, moreover, that the case would occupy but a few minutes, I did not attend ; but at the end of my day's labours, feeling a little curious, I called on my solicitor on my way home, when I was informed by his clerk that he was still in Court and that my case was not concluded. I went there. Sure enough, there were the counsel still arguing. Two attendants were busily employed handing in law-books every minute or two, with pieces of paper between the leaves indicating pages for reference. The counsel on the other side was forcibly explaining the case by supposing a similar one between a vendor and a purchaser of sacks of flour. I could not believe that it was my case they were proceeding with.

Later on "—— v. ——, page —," was quoted, and now sacks of corn and of linseed were brought in. The candles of the Court were burnt low down in the sockets, and the three Lords Justices were evidently very tired, when one of them spoke thus —

"I cannot conceive how Mr. Mapleson could expect to retain the exclusive services of any vocalist. In my opinion, sweet musical sounds should be for the benefit of everybody, and Mr.

Mapleson might just as well apply for an injunction to restrain the birds from singing on the trees."

The other Justices concurred in the view that a singer must be free to sing where he liked.

In the United States I have been invariably unsuccessful in my applications for an injunction, or of even getting the Courts to define the meaning of a singer's engagement. The legal mind cannot grasp the idea. Were it a contract for the erection of buildings or machinery, or the sale of goods, or the exclusive manufacture of a piece of cotton printing, the matter would be clear enough. But no evidence on the part of musical experts is ever by any chance understood by the Court.

The Drury Lane season of 1859 opened on the 25th April with *La Sonnambula*, when I was fortunate enough to introduce two new singers, who both met with unequivocal success. One was Mdle. Victoire Balfe (afterwards Lady Crampton, and subsequently Duchess de Frias), who appeared as "Amina;" the other, Signor Mongini, whose triumph was instantaneous in the part of "Elvino." This was his first appearance in England.

For this season two conductors had been engaged, Signor Arditi and Mr. (afterwards Sir Julius) Benedict. Both were excellent, but neither wished to be mistaken for the other. Both, moreover, were bald, and I remember on one occasion, when a grand combined performance was to take place, Benedict going into the prima donna's dressing-

room, taking up a brush, and carefully arranging his scanty hair so as to cover as much as possible of his denuded cranium.

"What are you about, Benedict?" I asked.

"Nothing particular," he replied; "only I don't want, whilst wielding the baton, to be mistaken for Arditi."

Soon afterwards Arditi appeared, and with a couple of brushes began operating on his hair so as to leave as much as possible of his bare skull exposed to view. He explained his action by exclaiming—

"I don't want to be mistaken for Benedict."

On the following night I brought forward Mdlle. Guarducci, who appeared as "Leonora" in *La Favorita*, with Giuglini as "Fernando." Guarducci's success was instantaneous, her lovely voice being the object of universal admiration.

A very strange thing occurred in connection with Guarducci's *début*. She had arrived in London only two days before, in the belief that she would have two or three weeks to prepare the part which she had undertaken to perform. By a careful process of cramming we got her through; and she made one of the most marked successes London had witnessed for many years. I thereupon announced the opera for repetition four days afterwards, when to my great astonishment Guarducci informed me that she did not know a note of her part, and it took ten days' rehearsals for her to learn it in systematic style.

Later on I produced Mercadante's *Giuramento*, which, however, met with indifferent success. Mdle. Titiens shortly afterwards appeared as "Lucrezia Borgia," when her phenomenal voice attracted such a house as had rarely been seen. Her performances throughout the remainder of the season were a series of triumphs never to be forgotten.

Arrangements were afterwards made for an operatic tour in the provinces, which we commenced in Dublin.

About this time the attentions of an Italian nobleman towards Mdle. Guarducci became rather conspicuous, and at Mdle. Titiens' suggestion I resolved to ask him what his intentions towards her really were. As no satisfactory answer could be obtained, Mdle. Titiens took Guarducci entirely under her charge, and all communication with the Italian nobleman was put an end to.

Shortly afterwards he visited me, assuring me his intentions were most honourable, and begging me to intercede so that he might again meet Guarducci. Mdle. Titiens' reply was—

"Yes, as her husband, not otherwise;" and to this ultimatum he consented.

In the course of a few days preparations were made for the marriage, but many difficulties presented themselves. The duke's father would have to be consulted, together with the Neapolitan Government, the Pope, and a few other powers.

About this time Mr. E. T. Smith appeared on

the scene, and he assured the priests that of his certain knowledge the proposed marriage would be most agreeable to the duke's father; whilst I, on my side, induced the Consul of the then King of Naples and of the Two Sicilies to affix the Government stamp to the contract. I also had a marriage settlement drawn, whereby it was stipulated that if Mdle. Guarducci at any time after the marriage should feel disposed she should have liberty to resume the exercise of her profession, and take the whole of the benefits she might derive therefrom for her own use; the duke engaging, moreover, that on the day he succeeded to his father's property and title he would assign to her £50,000 for her sole and separate use. The marriage was celebrated in the Metropolitan Church of Dublin, with full choral service, in which Piccolomini, Titiens, Aldighieri, Giuglini, and others took part. The scene was most impressive.

Within a week afterwards the marriage had made such a stir in Italy that the new duchess had to leave me, and, accompanied by the duke, take her departure for Italy.

I did not meet them afterwards until the year 1863, when at my hotel in Naples a gorgeous equipage drove up, in which were the Duke and Duchess di Cirilla, with a beautiful little child. It appeared that he had succeeded to his titles and estates, that he had already handed over the large sum of money promised in the settlement, and that

they were the happiest couple in the world. They insisted upon my spending several days with them at their palace; and as it was the closing day of the Carnival we amused ourselves from the balcony of the Palazzo by throwing the most gorgeous sweetmeats, dolls, and other things at the heads of the populace. I was afterwards invited by the duke to a wild-boar hunt. He had charge of all the King's preserves at Caserta, and by his hospitable attentions he enabled me to pass the time most pleasantly.

Looking over my papers I find, what had really escaped my memory, that in order to ensure, so far as we could, the execution of the Duke's promise in regard to the settlement on his wife, Mr. E. T. Smith and myself made him sign a bond by which he bound himself, should he fail to fulfil his pledge, to pay to each of us the sum of £5,000.

Here is an exact copy of the deed; the like of which could scarcely be found in the archives of any Opera House in the world:—

“Know all Men by these Presents that I Alfonso Catalano Gonzaga de Duchi de Cirella formerly of Naples but now stopping at Gresham Hotel Dublin am held and firmly bound unto Edward Tyrrel Smith of Pennsylvania Castle Dorset England and Lessee of the Theatre Royal Drury Lane London but now stopping at Gresham Hotel Dublin and James Henry Mapleson of 12 Haymarket London Gentleman but now stopping at Gresham Hotel

Dublin in the sum of Ten thousand pounds sterling good and lawful money of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland to be paid to the said Edward Tyrrel Smith and James Henry Mapleson or their lawful Attorney Executors Administrators or assigns to the which payment to be made I do bind myself my heirs executors and administrators firmly by these presents Sealed with my seal and dated the eighth day of August in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty-nine

The Condition of the above obligation is such that if the above bound Alfonso Catalano Gonzaga de Duchi de Cirella his heirs executors or administrators shall and do well and truly pay or cause to be paid unto the above named Edward Tyrrel Smith and James Henry Mapleson their executors administrators or assigns the just and full sum of Five thousand pounds sterling of good and lawful money of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland according to the covenant on his part contained in a certain Indenture of Settlement bearing even date herewith and made between Carolina Guarducci of the first part the said Alfonso Catalano Gonzaga de Duchi de Cirella of the second part and the said Edward Tyrrel Smith and James Henry Mapleson of the third part and shall also fully perform all and singular the other covenants and agreements on the part of him the said Alfonso Catalano Gonzaga contained in the aforesaid Settlement without fraud or further delay that

then the above obligation is to be void and of none effect or else to stand and remain in full force and virtue in law

ALFONSO CATALANO GONZAGA

DE DUCHI DE CIRELLA

Signed sealed and delivered in the presence of by Alfonso Catalano Gonzaga de Duchi de Cirella the same having been first truly read explained and interpreted to him by J H Mapleson

THOMAS FITZGERALD

Solicitor 20 Saint Andrew St Dublin

THOS SNOWE

Neapolitan Vice Consul

I hereby certify that the within named James Henry Mapleson took a solemn oath administered by me that he had truly read explained and interpreted the true contents of the annexed Bond to the within named Carolina Guarducci and Alfonso Catalano Gonzaga de Duchi de Cirella

Neapolitan Vice Consulate

Dublin 10th August 1859 (nine)

THOS SNOWE

V Consul "



CHAPTER III.

NOCTURNAL NEGOTIATIONS—REOPENING OF HER MAJESTY'S
THEATRE—SAYERS AND HEENAN PATRONIZE THE
OPERA—ENGLISH AND ITALIAN OPERA COMBINED—
SMITH AND HIS SPECULATIONS—DISCOVERY OF ADELINA
PATTI—MY MANAGEMENT OF THE LYCEUM.

EARLY in the spring of 1860 I opened negotiations again with Lord Dudley, on behalf of Mr. Smith, to obtain the lease of Her Majesty's Theatre. After spending two days at Witley Court with his lordship I returned to London with the lease, and loaded with game.

The next step was to secure the services of Mdle. Titiens, Giuglini, and others who still were bound to Mr. Lumley; and for that purpose Mr. Smith and myself started for the Continent. Mr. Lumley met us at Boulogne; the Channel, as in the previous year, being still too breezy for him to cross.

On our arrival we found that Mr. Lumley had prepared a sumptuous banquet. Every kind of expensive wine was on the table, together with the

most famous liqueurs. The Bordeaux, the Burgundy, the Champagne, the Chartreuse, the Curaçao, and the Cognac were for us; whilst Mr. Lumley, like a clever diplomatist, confined himself to spring water. After I had made several attempts to broach the subject of our visit, which Lumley pretended not to understand, he showed himself quite astonished when he heard that Mr. Smith contemplated engaging his artists. To me fell the duty of conducting the negotiations between these two wily gentlemen; and it was not until about three or four o'clock the following morning that things began to get into focus. Mr. Lumley, in the meantime, had kept ordering innumerable syphons and *fines champagnes* for Mr. Smith, before whom the bottles were perpetually empty. As Mr. Smith warmed up, he wanted extensions for the following autumn, to which Lumley, reluctantly, of course, agreed. In the end the transfer was to cost some £16,000—I having obtained a reduction of £3,000 or £4,000 from the original price insisted on by Lumley. I afterwards had to draw an engagement that would prove satisfactory to both parties; a matter which was not finally settled until nearly six o'clock in the morning.

Mr. Smith having observed that he would see to the financial part being promptly carried out, Mr. Lumley replied that he would prefer to have bills drawn and handed over to him at once, payable at different dates, for the whole of the amount. He

feared, he said, that some hostile creditor might attach any moneys in Smith's hands payable to him. Smith regretted that in France they could not purchase bill stamps, otherwise he would have been delighted to meet Mr. Lumley's views. Mr. Lumley, however, in getting a brush from his little hand-bag found some papers he could not account for, but which had somehow got in there; and these, to the astonishment of both Lumley and Smith, proved to be bill stamps. The next thing was to draw the various bills; and Smith remarked before leaving the banqueting-room that it would be better to finish the remains of the bottle then before him, lest the hotel servants should do so and get drunk. Mr. Lumley, instead of going to bed, went back to Paris by the early morning train, while Smith and myself returned to London.

The company for the season of 1860 was a marvellously attractive one. .

Admirable, too, were the works produced.

Mr. Smith about this time had acquired various restaurants in London, besides the Alhambra, Cremorne Gardens, Drury Lane, and a variety of other establishments. The management of the opera was, therefore, left entirely to me, except that I received occasional visits at the most unseasonable hours from Mr. Smith, who arrived with the strangest suggestions. About this time the celebrated fight for the championship took place between Sayers and Heenan, and as the Covent

Garden people were getting rather ahead of us, Mr. Smith, with a view to increased receipts, insisted on my announcing that Messrs. Sayers and Heenan, who had fought the day previously, would attend the opera in their bruised state. It was with the greatest difficulty that I afterwards got the announcement withdrawn from the papers. Both men appeared, nevertheless, that evening—one worse-looking than the other—in a private box which Smith had prepared specially for them on the grand tier; one corner being filled with brandies and sodas, and the other with bottles of champagne. Both men were so fatigued with their business of the previous day that before the end of the first act they went home, much to my relief.

Shortly afterwards Smith proposed that the Champion's belt (which had been divided in two) should be presented on the stage between the acts of the opera. This, too, I overruled, and the ceremony ultimately took place at the Alhambra.

On another occasion Mr. Smith suggested to me an idea that had occurred to him for closing up Covent Garden, by giving a grand double performance of *Il Trovatore* without any increase of prices. He proposed dividing the stage into two floors, as in the opera of *Aida*: with the occupants as follows:—

| | | Top floor. | | Bottom floor. |
|-----------------|-----|------------|-----|---------------|
| "Manrico" | ... | Mongiui | ... | Ginglini. |
| "Conte di Luna" | ... | Aldighieri | ... | Everardi. |
| "Azucena" | ... | Alboni | ... | Borghi-Mamo. |
| "Leonora" | ... | Grisi | ... | Titians. |

The singers were alarmed, as the matter became serious. This project, however, like previous ones, I ultimately succeeded in setting aside. I pleaded that the preparations for the production of *Oberon*, now resolved upon, needed all my attention. Benedict, the favourite pupil of Weber, had undertaken to adapt the famous opera for the Italian stage by introducing recitative and excerpts from some of Weber's other works, whilst Planché, the author of the libretto, undertook the *mise en scène*. A really grand performance took place, with the following cast of characters :—

“Sir Huon,” Mongini; “Scerasmin,” Everardi; “Oberon,” Belart; “Fatima,” Alboni; “Rezia,” Titens.

Despite the artistic successes of the season, matters, as usual with operatic managers, did not go well in a financial sense. This, in a great measure, was to be accounted for by the drain on our exchequer caused by Mr. Smith's numerous outside speculations; for the receipts from the various establishments were all lumped into one banking account.

On one occasion I recollect having a deal of difficulty with the Sheriff's officers, who had got possession of the wardrobes. We were on the point of producing the *Huguenots*, and the whole of the dresses for that opera were under ban. One afternoon Smith came in; and after some little time it appeared that the officers had agreed not to take

the *Huguenots* until we had had two performances out of it.

In fact, there was always some trouble going on, and it was with the greatest difficulty that we got through the season.

In the Boulogne contracts Lumley's artists were ceded not only for a summer, but also for an autumn season at Her Majesty's. As, however, they were to sing but three times a week, it occurred to me that English opera might be tried with advantage on the alternate nights. Arrangements were accordingly entered into, through the kindness of Mr. Thomas Chappell, with Mrs. L. Sherrington, Mr. Sims Reeves, and Mr. Santley. Charles Hallé was at the same time engaged as conductor.

Negotiations were also entered into with Macfarren for the production of an English work entitled *Robin Hood*, the libretto by Oxenford. The opera met with very great success, so much so that the chief attentions of the public were directed to the evenings on which *Robin Hood* was performed. I then opened negotiations with Vincent Wallace to prepare an opera to follow, entitled the *Amber Witch*, libretto by Chorley, in which Mr. Sims Reeves, Mrs. L. Sherrington, Santley, Patey, and others appeared.

But again the war cloud seemed to hover over the establishment, and again the Sheriff's officers appeared in force. It was thought advisable to transfer the *Amber Witch* to Drury Lane, leaving

the myrmidons of the law in possession of the theatre and its belongings. The *Amber Witch* wardrobe (which somehow had fallen off the portico of the theatre early one Sunday morning) found its way to the other theatre. Here the part of the "Amber Witch" was undertaken by Madame Parepa, *vice* Sherrington.

Mr. Edward Tyrrel Smith, with whom I had business relations for some three or four years, was an extraordinary personage, whose like could only be met with in our own time, and in such capitals as London or Paris, where the population in general has certainly not the faintest idea how some small part of that population lives. Mr. E. T. Smith had made up his mind early in life to be the possessor, or at least the handler, of considerable sums of money; and he at one time found it worth his while, so as never to be without funds, to hire daily, at the rate of £1 a day, a thousand-pound note, which was obligingly entrusted to him by a money-lender of the period, one Sam Genese.

There are not many persons to whom such a loan would be worth the thirty-six and a half per cent. interest which Mr. E. T. Smith paid for it. He was an adept, however, at all kinds of business, and his thousand-pound note enabled him to make purchases on credit, which, without deposit money, he would have been unable to effect. Attending sales he would buy whatever happened to suit him, with

a view to immediate resale, offering his thousand-pound note as a deposit, to discover, as a matter of course, that it could not be changed, and have the article for which he had bid marked down to him at the same. Then he would resell it, and pocket the difference.

The mere exhibition of the thousand-pound note secured him a certain amount of credit, and he was not likely ever to meet with an auctioneer able to change it. Before offering his (or rather Mr. Genese's) note he took care to write his name on the back of it. Afterwards his usurious friend would replace the note that had been endorsed by a brand new one, and occasions presented themselves in which it was a distinct advantage for E. T. Smith to be known as a gentleman who, in the course of a comparatively short space of time, had inscribed his name on several bank-notes, each for a thousand pounds.

Once, when St. Dunstan's Villa, in the Regent's Park, was knocked down to Smith for ten thousand pounds, the thousand-pound note which he had, as usual, in his waistcoat pocket was just what was wanted to satisfy the auctioneer's immediate demands. Smith handed up the note with the observation that he would turn the place into a second Cremorne Gardens, in which character it could not fail to attract thousands of people and bring in lots of money. At this announcement the auctioneer drew back and informed the apparently

eager purchaser that the house could be converted to no such purpose.

One day, when I had run down to Brighton with Mr. Smith, then associated with me in the management of Drury Lane, we missed, by about half a minute, the return train we had intended to catch; and we had now two hours to wait. Smith could not remain idle, and strolling with me along the Parade his attention was attracted by a corner house which was for sale, and which, it at once struck him, might be turned to profitable account as a milliner's shop. He inquired as to the rent and other conditions, bought the house there and then, and at once ordered that the windows on the ground floor should be replaced by much larger ones of plate glass.

That night he started for Paris, and in the Passage du Saumon, where bonnets of almost the latest fashion can be purchased for moderate prices, laid in a stock of millinery for his Brighton "*magasin des modes*." While making his purchases in Paris he secured the services of two eligible young women, who were brought over to direct the Brighton establishment. This, within a very short time, he duly opened under the name of "Clémentine," and the house of Clémentine did such good business that a few weeks afterwards its spirited proprietor was able to sell it at seven hundred pounds' profit.

On the occasion of a melancholy event which compelled all the London managers to close their theatres, Mr. E. T. Smith saw in this day of

national gloom a tempting opportunity for a masked ball. It was to be given at Her Majesty's Theatre, and earnestly as I sought to divert him from his project he insisted on carrying it out. I had no right of veto in the matter, and the masked ball took place. The sum of one guinea entitled a ticket-holder to entrance and supper, and a day or two before the entertainment fires were lighted in the property-room, the painting-room, and the ward-ropes, in order to cook some hundreds of fowls which had been purchased in the market, after ordinary market hours, at a very cheap rate.

Wine would be an extra charge. In order to suit the tastes of connoisseurs, Mr. Smith made large purchases of Heidsieck, Pommery Greno, Perrier Jouet, and other favourite brands somewhere in Whitechapel, where they can be secured at a much less cost than at Epernay or Rheims. When the wine came in he showed it to me with a look of pride, and opened a bottle of someone's *cuvée réservée* in order to have my opinion. I told him frankly that the bottles, labels, and the names branded on the corks seemed all that could be desired, and that I found nothing bad except the wine. This he seemed to look upon as an unimportant detail, and the Whitechapel champagne was sold to infatuated dancers at ten and twelve shillings a bottle.

About this time I chanced to hear of an extraordinary young vocalist, who had been charming the Americans, and, although hardly nineteen, seemed

to have obtained a firm hold on the sympathy and admiration of their public. I opened negotiations at once, in order to secure her services for the forthcoming season at Her Majesty's, and a contract was duly entered into on behalf of Mr. Smith, whereby the little lady undertook to sing four nights on approval, when, in case of success, she was to have a salary of £10 a week. I likewise concluded an engagement with Mario, whose term had expired at Covent Garden, and with Madame Grisi; while Costa undertook to join the following year on the expiration of his existing contract with Mr. Gye.

In fact, all looked very promising for the year 1861. But, as the time approached, I found more difficulty than ever in communicating with Mr. Smith, who seemed to be out of the way. I then accidentally learned that owing to the extreme financial difficulty in which he was placed through his numerous outside speculations he had been compelled to accept an offer from Mr. Gye of £4,000 on condition of his not opening.

In accordance with this arrangement Her Majesty's Theatre remained closed.

Some time in the month of April the little lady from America arrived and sent me up her card, bearing the name of Adelina Patti. She was accompanied by Maurice Strakosch, her brother-in-law. They wished to know when Mr. Smith's season was likely to begin. I could give them no information beyond the current report which they had already heard

themselves. The little lady, who was then seated on a sofa at the Arundel Hotel, at the bottom of Norfolk Street, Strand, suggested that I should try the speculation myself, as she felt sure she would draw money. I thereupon asked her to let me hear her, that I might judge as to the quality of her voice, to which she responded by singing "Home, Sweet Home." I saw that I had secured a diamond of the first water, and immediately set about endeavouring to get Her Majesty's Theatre. But this was a hopeless business, as Smith, who still held the lease, was nowhere to be found. Shortly afterwards, however, I met Smith by chance, and proposed renting Drury Lane from him, without saying what for.

Two days later he brought me an agreement which he requested me to sign. I said that I should like first to glance over it. He pointed out to me that I might give operas, dramas, pantomimes, ballets, in fact everything; and that I should have no difficulty in making a very fine season. But on the top of the page overleaf my eye caught sight of a parenthesis, within which were the words "Italian Opera excepted." I thereupon put down the pen, raised some question about the deposit, and afterwards kept clear of Mr. Smith.

But many years after he had ceased to be connected with theatres I one day received a letter from him, in which he told me he was in the metal trade, and asked me to send him a couple of stalls for

himself and his "old woman." The heading of the letter announced the character of his new business, and he added in a postscript: "Do you ever want any tin?"

Nothing now remained but to secure the Lyceum; the only other theatre available. This I did. It having been occupied but two or three years previously by the Royal Italian Opera, I considered the locale would be perfectly suited for my purpose. I thereupon started off to Paris to find Mr. Lumley, from whom I now wished to secure for myself the singers still engaged to him. Mr. Lumley had unfortunately left for Marseilles. I myself started for Marseilles, but in passing Avignon I thought I saw black whiskers in the passing train resembling those of Mr. Lumley. But I was not sure. I therefore continued my journey.

"Mr. Lumley, est parti," I was told on my arrival. I returned to Paris, and was informed that he had gone to England, which I knew was not possible, except on a Sunday. This being Saturday, I determined to stop at Boulogne and make inquiries; and in the same hotel where I had conducted the negotiations some two or three years previously I found him. I soon completed my arrangements, undertaking to give him half my total gross nightly receipts in exchange for Titiens and Giuglini. I undertook to provide the whole of the expenses, with Alboni, Patti, and others among my other singers. I returned joyfully to London, and at

once went to the Arundel Hotel to inform Miss Patti and Strakosch of my good luck. They did not seem overjoyed, or in any way to participate in my exuberant delight.

Maurice Strakosch told me that as their last £5 note had been spent he had been obliged to borrow £50 of Mr. Gye, which intelligence at once reduced my height by at least two inches; and after a deal of difficulty I ascertained that he had signed a receipt for the said loan in a form which really constituted an engagement for the Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden.

In short, I found myself manager of the Lyceum Theatre, with an expensive Company, and with Mdlle. Patti opposed to me in the immediate vicinity at Covent Garden.

My season opened at the Lyceum on Saturday, the 8th June, 1861, the opera being *Il Trovatore*, "Manrico," Signor Giuglini; "Il Conte di Luna," Signor delle Sedie, the eminent baritone, who made his first appearance in England; "Ferrando," Signor Gassier; whilst "Azucena" was Mdme. Alboni, and "Leonora," Mdlle. Titiens; Arditi conducting the orchestra, which was composed of the members of the Philharmonic Society and Her Majesty's private band. On the second night I gave *Lucrezia Borgia*, with Giuglini, Gassier, Alboni, and Titiens in leading parts.

In the meanwhile I placed Verdi's new opera, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, in rehearsal in order that I might

have the honour of representing it for the first time in this country; and by dint of almost superhuman effort on the part of Arditì and the principal artists, I produced it some few days before Covent Garden, although it had been in rehearsal there for over six weeks. I well recollect how, after a fatiguing performance of such an opera as *Les Huguenots*, *Lucrezia Borgia*, or *Norma*, Mdlle. Titiens, Giuglini, and other artists would go in the direction of Eaton Square to take supper with Signor Arditì, and at about half-past one in the morning begin rehearsing. The rehearsals terminated, the full blaze of the sun would accompany us on our way home to bed. This was done night after night.

But our efforts were rewarded by the immense success the opera achieved at its first performance.

During the first weeks of my management I had a strong counter-attraction operating against me in the shape of a large fire raging in Tooley Street, which it seemed to be the fashionable thing to go and see. Thousands attended it every evening.

Before the close of the season I gave a grand combined performance composed of excerpts from various operas—a kind of representation never popular with the British public; but, this being the last night of my season, the house was crowded from top to bottom. During the evening the choristers had banded together, threatening to refuse their services unless I complied with an exorbitant

claim which I considered they had no right to make.

Prior to the curtain rising for the final section of the performance—the entire fourth act of the *Huguenots*—I was sent for. All reasoning with the chorus singers was useless. I therefore left the room, telling them to remain until I returned, which they promised to do. I then instructed Mdle. Titiens and Giuglini that the “Conspirators’ Chorus” (“Bénédiction des Poignards”) would be left out, and that the act must commence, as it was now very late, with the entry of “Raoul” and “Valentine” for the grand duet, whereby I dispensed with the services of the chorus altogether.

No sooner did they hear that the opera was proceeding than they one and all surrendered. I, however, had the pleasure of telling them that I should never require one of them again—and I never did.

This really was the origin, now common at both Opera-houses, of the introduction of choristers from Italy. I may mention that the members of my refractory chorus were people who had been some thirty or forty years, or even longer, at the Opera-houses and other theatres in London, and it was really an excellent opportunity for dispensing with their services.

At the close of the opera season, on balancing my accounts, I found myself a loser of some £1,800. Thereupon, I resolved to carry on the Opera again

in a larger locale next year in order that I might get straight; vowing, as the Monte Carlo gambler constantly does, that as soon as I got quite straight I would stop, and never play again. I have been endeavouring during the last thirty years to get straight, and still hope to do so.

CHAPTER IV.

AT HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE—VERDI'S CANTATA—GIUGLINI
AT THE SEASIDE—POLLIO AND THE DRUM-STICK—AN
OPERATIC CONSPIRACY—CONFUSION OF THE CON-
SPIRATORS.

EARLY in the following spring, I succeeded in securing a promise of the lease of Her Majesty's Theatre for 21 years, for which I deposited £4,000 pending its preparation. I hastened to make public announcement of the fact. Lord Dudley, however, kept varying the conditions of payment, which I understood originally to have been a deposit of £4,000 to remain as security for the payment of the rent throughout the tenancy. His lordship contended, however, that the sum deposited was in part payment of the first year's rent, and that another £4,000 must be paid before I could obtain possession.

This was indeed a terrible set-back to me, and I was at my wits' end what to do. However, through the kindness of my friend Mitchell, who subscribed largely, together with various members of the trade,

I secured the remainder; and on the first day of April—ominous day!—I passed through the stage door with the key of the Opera in one pocket and £2—my sole remaining balance—in the other. I stood in the middle of the stage contemplating my position. I was encouraged by the celebrated black cat of Her Majesty's; which, whether in good faith or bad, rubbed herself in the most friendly manner against my knees.

Prior to the opening of my season of 1862 I made an increase in the number of stalls from seven to ten rows, my predecessor having increased them from four to seven. This removed the Duke of Wellington, who was an old supporter of the house, much farther from the stage, it having always been his custom to occupy the last number. Thus in Mr. Lumley's time he occupied No. 82, in Mr. Smith's time 163, whilst this increase of mine sent back His Grace to 280. Nothing but the last stall would satisfy him; he did not care where it was.

Prior to my opening the most tempting offers were made by Mr. Gye to my great prima donna Titieus. Her name, which closed my list of artists, was mentioned in my prospectus with the "subjoined prefatory remarks: "The Director feels "that with the following list of artists nothing more "need be said. Of one, however, a special word may "not be out of place, since she may without exag- "geration be said to constitute the last link of that "chain of glorious prime donne commencing with

“Catalani. It is seldom that Nature lavishes on one
“person all the gifts which are needed to form a
“great soprano: a voice whose register entitles it to
“claim this rank is of the rarest order. Melodious
“quality and power, which are not less essential
“than extended register, are equally scarce.
“Musical knowledge, executive finish, and perfect
“intonation are indispensable, and to these the
“prima donna should add dramatic force and adapta-
“bility, together with a large amount of personal
“grace. Even these rare endowments will not
“suffice unless they are illumined by the fire of
“genius. By one only of living artists has this high
“ideal been reached—by Mdle. Titiens.”

The subscriptions began pouring in, and all appeared *couleur de rose*, when Mr. Gye's envoy, the late Augustus Harris, again appeared, Titiens not having yet signed her contract with me; and he produced a contract signed by Mr. Gye with the amount she was to receive in blank. She was to fill in anything she chose. It was indeed a trying moment, and various members of her family urged her to give consideration to this extraordinary proposal. She, however, replied in few words: “I have given my promise to Mr. Mapleson, which is better than all contracts.” My season, therefore, commenced in due course.

I had got together a magnificent company, and as the public found that the performances given merited their support and confidence, the receipts gradually

began to justify all expectations, and within a short time I found myself with a very handsome balance at my bankers. This may be accounted for by the very large influx of strangers who came to London to visit the Exhibition of 1862. One day, about this time, in coming from my house at St. John's Wood, I met Verdi, who explained to me that he was very much disappointed at the treatment he had received at the hands of the Royal Commissioners, who had rejected the cantata he had written for the opening of the Exhibition. I at once cheered him up by telling him I would perform it at Her Majesty's Theatre if he would superintend its direction, Mdlle. Titiens undertaking the solo soprano part. The cantata was duly performed, and the composer was called some half-dozen times before the curtain. At the same time the work was purchased by a London publisher, who paid a handsome price for it. Verdi appeared very grateful, and promised me many advantages for the future.

Early in the season I produced the opera of *Semiramide*, in which the sisters Marchisio appeared with distinction. Afterwards came Weber's romantic opera of *Oberon*; J. R. Planché, the author of the libretto, and Mr. Benedict, Weber's favourite pupil, taking part in its reproduction.

This was followed by the remounting of Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable*, with Titiens in the part of "Alice," the whole of the scenery and dresses being entirely new. Mdlle. (now Mdme.) Trebelli

shortly afterwards arrived, and on May 4th appeared with brilliant success as "Maffio Orsini" in *Lucrezia Borgia*, her second appearance taking place four days afterwards in the part of "Azucena" (*Trovatore*), when her permanent reputation seemed to be already ensured, as it in fact was.

About this time I had a great deal of difficulty with the tenor, Giuglini, who, like a spoilt child, did not seem to know what he really required. He went down to Brighton accompanied by a certain notorious lady, and all persuasion to induce him to return proved useless. He said he had the "migraine." Thereupon I hit upon a device for making him return, which succeeded perfectly.

On the day of my visit I announced the *Trovatore* for performance, with Naudin, the tenor whom I had introduced some two years previously to London, in the principal rôle. I spoke to a friendly critic, who promised, in the event of Naudin's meeting with the success which I anticipated, to make a point of recording the fact; and on the following morning at Brighton, as I was accidentally walking with Giuglini, I purchased the paper in which my friend wrote and handed it to the lady who was absorbing all Giuglini's attention. I casually observed that Giuglini might now remain at Brighton for a lengthened period. In the course of an hour the tenor was on his way to London, volunteering to sing the same evening if necessary; adding, however, a condition which really caused me some inconvenience.

He now informed me that he had written a better cantata than Verdi's, and that unless I performed it I could no longer rely upon his services; if, however, his work were given he would remain faithful to me for the future. The work was duly delivered, in which I remember there was a lugubrious character destined for Mdle. Titiens, called "*Una madre Italiana*." Giuglini further required 120 windows on the stage, from each of which, at a given signal, the Italian flag was to appear; and no smaller number than 120 would satisfy him. We were at our wits' end. But the difficulty was met by arranging the scene in perspective; grown-up people being at the windows nearest the public, then children at those farther removed, until in the far distance little dolls were used.

At a given signal, when the orchestra struck up the Garibaldi hymn, these were all to appear. I need scarcely say that the cantata was given but for one night. Poor Arthur Bacon, of the Ship Hotel, backed up Giuglini's own opinion when he declared it to be "a fine work."

The business meanwhile kept on increasing. In fact, I kept the theatre open on and off until nearly Christmas time, and always to crowded houses.

During my autumn provincial tour of 1862 I had much trouble in finding a substitute for my contralto, at that time Mdle. Borchardt, who was suffering from a sudden attack of "grippe;" an illness which, at least in the artistic world, includes influenza, low fever, and other maladies hard to

define. The opera announced was *Lucrezia Borgia*, and my difficulty was to find a lady capable of singing the part of "Maffio Orsini." I improvised a substitute who possessed good will, but was without knowledge of music and had scarcely a voice. In an apology to the public I stated that Mdle. Borchardt being indisposed, another artist had at a moment's notice kindly consented to sing the part of "Maffio Orsini," but that "with the permission of the audience she would omit the brindisi of the third act."

This seemed little enough to ask, though the part of "Maffio Orsini" without the famous drinking song, "Il segreto per esser felice," was only too much like the celebrated performance of *Hamlet* with the part of the Crown Prince of Denmark left out.

It being quite understood, however, that the brindisi was to be omitted, the singer left out on her own account and by my special directions (scarcely necessary, it must be admitted) the legend of the opening scene. Cut out the legend and drinking song, and nothing of the part of "Maffio Orsini" remains except the few bars of defiance which this personage has to address to "Lucrezia Borgia" in the finale of the first act. These, however, can be sung by some other artist, and an audience unacquainted with the opera will probably not complain if they are not sung at all. The brindisi of the banqueting scene could not, of course, have been omitted without explanation. But the

necessary apology having been frankly made there was nothing more to be said about the matter.

I hoped that Mdle. Borchardt would be sufficiently recovered to undertake next evening the part of "Azucena" in *Il Trovatore*. But "la grippe" still held her in its clutches. She would have sung had it been possible to do so, but all power of singing had for the time left her, and it was absolutely necessary to replace her in the part which she was advertised to play.

In the first act of *Il Trovatore* "Azucena" does not appear, and I had reason to believe, or at least to hope, that before the curtain rose for the second act I should succeed in persuading my *seconda donna* to assume in the second and succeeding acts—in which "Leonora's" confidant is not wanted—the character of "Azucena."

At the last moment my eloquence prevailed, and the *seconda donna* declared herself ready to undertake the part of the gipsy. As for singing the music, that was a different question. Already instructed by me, she was to get through the part as well as she could without troubling herself to sing.

Meanwhile I had desired Titiens, Giuglini, and Aldighieri to exert themselves to the utmost in the first act; and it was not until after they had gained a great success in the trio which concludes this act that I ventured to put forward an apology for my new and more than inexperienced "Azucena."

It was necessary first of all to see to her "make

up," and as soon as the requisite permission had been given, I myself covered her face—and covered it thickly—with red ochre. Unfortunately, in my haste and anxiety I forgot to paint more than her face and the front part of her neck. The back part of her neck, together with her hands and arms, remained as nearly as possible a pure white. I had told my new "Azucena" to sit on the sofa, resting her head upon her hands, and this, at the risk of bringing into too great contrast the red ochre and the pearl white, she obligingly did.

I had arranged that after the anvil chorus, the opening scene of the second act should terminate; the duet between "Manrico" and "Azucena" being thus left out. We passed at once to the "Count di Luna's" famous solo, "Il balen," and so on to the finale of this act. In the third act "Azucena" was simply brought before the Count and at once condemned to imprisonment. In the fourth act she had been strictly enjoined to go to sleep quietly on the ground, and not to wake up until "Manrico" was decapitated.

Thus treated, the part of "Azucena" is not a difficult one to play; and how else is it to be dealt with when the contralto of the Company is ill, and no adequate substitute for her can possibly be found?

The devices, however, that I have set forth are obviously of a kind that can only be resorted to once in a way under stress of difficulties otherwise insurmountable.

Accordingly, when the third day came and Mdle.

Borchardt was still too unwell to sing, there was nothing left for me but to announce an opera which contained no contralto part. The one I selected was *Norma*, a work for which our principal tenor, Signor Giuglini, had conceived a special hatred and in which he had sworn by the Holy Virgin and Madame Puzzi never to sing again. I must here break off for a moment to explain the origin of this peculiar detestation.

About a year before Giuglini had been playing the part of "Pollio" to the "Norma" of Mdlle. Titiens; and in the scene where the Druid priestess summons by the sound of the gong an assembly which will have to decide as to the punishment to be inflicted upon a guilty person unnamed, Mdlle. Titiens, on the point of administering to the gong an unusually forcible blow, threw back the drum-stick with such effect, that coming into violent contact with the nose of Signor Giuglini, who was close behind her, it drew from it if not torrents of blood, at least blood in sufficient quantity to make the sensitive tenor tremble for his life. He thought his last hour had come, and even when he found that he was not mortally wounded still nourished such a hatred against the offending drum-stick that he uttered the solemn combination oath already cited, and required, moreover, that the drum-stick should never more be brought into his presence. If not destroyed, it was at least to be kept carefully locked up.

Mdme. Puzzi had been to Giuglini more than a mother. Frequently, indeed, this lady helped him out of scrapes in which a mother would probably not have cared to interfere. She rescued him, for instance, more than once from enterprising young women, who, by dint of personal fascinations, of flattery, and sometimes of downright effrontery, had got the impressionable singer beneath their influence. When things were at their worst, Giuglini would write or telegraph to "Mamma Puzzi," as he called her; and his adopted mother, to do her justice, always came to his relief, and by ingenuity and strength of will freed him from the tyranny of whatever siren might for the time have got hold of him.

When, therefore, he swore by Madame Puzzi he was serious, and when he pronounced his grand combination oath, "By the Holy Virgin and Madame Puzzi," it was understood that he had spoken his last word, and that nothing could ever move him from the determination arrived at under such holy influences.

Giuglini was in many things a child. So, indeed, are most members of the artistic tribe, and it is only by treating them and humouring them as children that one can get them to work at all.

The only two things Giuglini really delighted in were kites and fireworks. Give him kites to fly by day and rockets, roman candles, or even humble squibs and crackers to let off at night, and he was perfectly

happy. Often in the Brompton Road, at the risk of being crushed to death by omnibuses, he has been seen lost in admiration of the kite he was flying, until at last the omnibus men came to know him, and from sympathy, or more probably from pity for the joy he took in childish pleasures, would drive carefully as they came near him.

His fireworks proved to him more than once a source of serious danger. On one occasion, in Dublin, for instance, when he was coming home from the theatre in company with Mademoiselle Titiens, who had just achieved a triumph of more than usual brilliancy, the carriage, already stuffed full of fireworks, was surrounded by a number of enthusiastic persons who, heedless of the mine beneath them, smoked cigars and pipes as they at the same time leaned forward and cheered.

Let us now return to the doings of Signor Giuglini in connection with the opera of *Norma*, in which he had sworn his great oath never again to appear.

I have said that the artist is often child-like; but with this childishness a good deal of cunning is sometimes mixed up. The one thing he cannot endure is life under regular conditions. Exciting incidents of some kind he must have in order to keep his nerves in a due state of tension, his blood in full circulation. It annoys him even to have his salary paid regularly at the appointed time. He would rather have an extra sum one day and nothing

at all another. The gratuity will give him unexpected pleasure, while the non-payment of money justly due to him will give him something to quarrel about.

The artist is often suspicious, and in every Opera Company there are a certain number of conspirators who are always plotting mischief and trying to bring about misunderstandings between the manager on the one hand, and on the other the vocalists, musicians, and even the minor officials of the establishment.

Needless to say that the singer on the night he sings, his nerves vibrating with music, cannot at the end of the performance go to bed and get quietly to sleep; and on one occasion, at Edinburgh, I passed on my way to my bed the room in which Signor Giuglini was reposing, with a cigar in his mouth, between the sheets and listening to the tales, the gossip, the scandal, and the malicious suggestions poured into his ears by the *camorristi* of whom I have above spoken.

All I heard was, uttered in exciting tones, such words as "extra performance," "almanac," "imposition," "Mapleson," and so on.

I knew that some plot was being hatched against me, but what it could be I was unable to divine; nor, to tell the truth, did I trouble myself much about it.

Meanwhile I had spoken to Mr. Wyndham, manager of the Edinburgh Theatre, about the necessity, should Mademoiselle Borchardt still

remain ill, of performing some opera in which there was no part for a contralto. He saw the necessity of what I suggested, and agreed with me that *Norma* would be the best work to play. I, at the same time, informed him that Giuglini had sworn "by the Holy Virgin and Madame Puzzi" never more to appear in that work, and I had no reason for believing that he had forgotten either his impressive oath or his bruised nose.

It was resolved, therefore, to announce Signor Corsi for the part of "Pollio." This might have suited Giuglini, from the superstitious point of view; but it put him out in the project which, prompted by the *camorristi*, he had formed for extorting from me a certain sum of money. He was engaged to play sixteen times a month at the rate of sixty pounds a performance. I had wished to have his services four times a week; and in signing for sixteen performances a month it did not occur to me that now and then in the course of the year the tenor might be called upon to give a seventeenth. This was the point which he and his fellow-conspirators had been discussing in his bedroom on the night when it had struck me that some sort of dark scheme was being prepared for my confusion.

It had been pointed out to Giuglini that if he sang on the 31st of the month, as I originally intended him to do, he would be singing once too often—once more than had been stipulated for in his engagement; and thereupon he would be in a position

to enforce from me whatever penalty he might choose to impose. This he deigned to fix at the moderate sum of £160; and his claim was sent in to me just before—in consequence of the continued illness of Mdle. Borchardt—I had decided to change the opera, and out of respect for Signor Giuglini's own feelings, to assign the tenor part in *Norma* not to him, but to an artist who was not bound to keep clear of this opera either by a peculiarly solemn oath or by painful recollections of a dab on the nose from a vigorously-handled drum-stick.

The opera, then, was announced with Signor Corsi in the part of "Pollio;" and there seemed to be no reason why the performance should not go off successfully. I noticed, however, some ominous signs, and, for one reason or another, it seemed to me that the carefully-laid mine, if it exploded at all, would burst that evening.

Giuglini was in a very excited condition, and I knew that whenever he felt unduly agitated he sent for "Mamma Puzzi" to come and soothe his irritated nerves. I did not know where Mdme. Puzzi was; but I *did* know that she might at any moment arrive, and I therefore gave orders that she was not, under any circumstances, to be admitted. The stage door was closed absolutely against her. With or without explanations, she was not to be let in.

When the night for the performance arrived I took care to see that Signor Corsi, at the proper

time, was fitly attired for the character of "Pollio." He had often played the part before in company with Mdle. Titiens, and I saw no reason for believing that his performance would not on this, as on previous occasions, be thoroughly satisfactory. The house was crowded. "Oroveso" had sung his air, and was being warmly applauded. I stood at the wing close to the first entrance and waited for Corsi to appear. The music in announcement of "Pollio's" entry was played; but no "Pollio" was to be seen. I motioned to Arditi, and the introductory strains were heard again. Still no "Pollio."

I rushed to Corsi's room in order to find out the meaning of the delay, when, to my consternation and horror, I saw Corsi seated in a chair with Mdme. Puzzi—Mdme. Puzzi, to whom all access to the theatre had been so strictly forbidden!—pulling off his fleshings (she had already divested him of his upper garments) while Giuglini was hurriedly taking off his costume of ordinary life in order to put on the uniform of the Roman soldier.

Giuglini, I found, had some days before telegraphed to Mdme. Puzzi at Turin begging his "mamma" to hurry to Edinburgh, where her child was in a terrible difficulty; and to Edinburgh she had come.

Mdme. Puzzi, refused admission at the stage door, had before the raising of the curtain gone round to the pit entrance, paid for her place, climbed over into the stalls, and then clambered from the stalls to the orchestra, and—most difficult of all these gym-

nastic performances—from the orchestra to the stage. She had then made her way to the dressing-rooms, and, finding Corsi already costumed for the part, had by persuasion or force induced him to change clothes with the excited tenor, who, by the very lady who was now helping him to break his vow, had sworn never to play the part he was on the point of undertaking.

The curtain, meantime, had been lowered, amidst deafening protests from the audience; and it was difficult to know what to do, until Giuglini, having, with due assistance from his “mamma,” completed his toilette, declared himself ready to sing the part of “Pollio” provided one hundred pounds were stopped out of the receipts to pay him for his extra performance!

On my afterwards taunting Giuglini with having broken his vow, he declared that Mdme. Puzzi possessed the power to liberate him from it.

When the audience were informed that the part of “Pollio” would be played by Signor Giuglini, they were naturally delighted. The performance was begun again from the beginning. The drumstick, however, in accordance with Giuglini’s earnest prayer, was kept in the property-room under lock and key, and Mdle. Titiens struck the gong with her hand.

Afterwards Giuglini showed himself a little ashamed of his conduct; and of the hundred pounds paid to him for the extra performance he

presented fifty to Mrs. Wyndham, with a request that she would expend the money in the purchase of a shawl. Mrs. Wyndham, however, would do nothing of the kind. She considered that I had been very badly treated, and made over the sum to me.

The remaining fifty pounds had to be shared between Giuglini and the conspirators who had put him up to the trick, each of them having bargained beforehand for a share in such plunder as might be obtained.

Then a claim was put in by Mdme. Puzzi for her travelling expenses from Turin. This her affectionate child was not prepared to allow, and some violent language was exchanged between him and his "mamma." How the delicate matter was ultimately arranged I forget; but in the end, when he had satisfied all demands made upon him, Giuglini could scarcely have gained much by his too elaborate stratagem.

CHAPTER V.

RUNNING OVER A TENOR—TITIENS IN ITALY—CASHING A
CHEQUE AT NAPLES—A NEAPOLITAN BALL—APPROACH-
ING A MINISTER—RETURN TO LONDON.

ONE afternoon about four o'clock, during the month of November, 1862, Giuglini sent word that he would be unable to sing the part of "Lionel" in *Martha* that evening, having had some dispute at home. All my persuasion was useless; nothing would induce him, and as at that period of the year there were no tenors to be found in London, I was at my wits' ends to know what to do, and I ultimately decided to close the theatre, having no alternative. I therefore got into a hansom and drove off to inform Mdme. Trebelli, also Mdle. Titiens, who was dining at her house, that there would be no need of their coming down.

On turning the corner of the Haymarket, Piccadilly, the horse's head struck a gentleman and forced him back on to the pavement. The cab was stopped, and a policeman came up. The gentleman

was not, however, injured, and to my great astonishment he turned out to be an English tenor, who had been lately in Italy. On learning this I politely took him into my cab and inquired what had brought him back to England. He said that he had been performing at various Italian theatres, and that he was now very desirous of obtaining a *début* in this country.

I at once informed him that nothing could be easier, and that it would be best for him to make his appearance immediately, without any further preparation, for thus he would have no time to reflect and get nervous. I then quite casually, as we were going along, asked him if he knew the opera of *Martha*, to which he replied that he knew nothing of the music and had never seen the work. This for the moment wrecked all my hopes as to saving my receipts that evening, the booking for which exceeded £600.

My impulse was to stop the cab and put him out; but first I sang to him a few bars of *M'appari*. This romance he said he knew, having occasionally sung it at concerts, but always with the English words. I thought no more of ejecting him from the cab, and continued my drive up to St. John's Wood.

On my relating to Mdlle. Titiens and Mdme. Trebelli how by good luck I had nearly run over a tenor they both said it was useless to think of attempting any performance.

I assured, however, my newly-caught tenor that if he would only be guided by me and appear forthwith he would make a great success. I at once set to work and showed him the stage business in the drawing-room, requesting Mdme. Trebelli to go through the acting of the part of "Nancy," and Mdle. Titiens through that of "Martha." I explained to the tenor that on entering he merely had to come on with his friend "Plunkett," go to the inn table, seat himself, drink as much beer as he liked, and at a given signal hand over the shilling to enlist the services of "Martha" at the Richmond Fair, after which he would drive her away in a cart. This would complete Act I.

In Act II. he simply had to enter the cottage leading "Martha," and afterwards to attempt to spin (two drawing-room chairs served as spinning wheels), until at last the wheels would be taken away by the two ladies. When the spinning quartet began he was merely to laugh heartily and appear joyous. In the third act I explained that he might sing his song provided always that he confined himself to Italian words. It did not much matter, in view of the public, what he sang if he only kept clear of English; and I advised him to keep repeating *M'appari* as often as he felt inclined. This he did, and in consequence of a printed apology which I had previously circulated in the theatre, to the effect that Signor Giuglini had refused his services without assigning any

reason, my new tenor was warmly applauded, receiving for his principal air a double encore, and afterwards a recall. In the last act there was, of course, nothing for him to do, and the newspapers of the next morning were unanimous in his praise.

The singer who rendered me these services was Mr. George Bolton, who some years later (his voice having by that time become a baritone) played with great success the part of "Petruchio" to Minnie Hauk's "Katherine" in Goetz's *Taming of the Shrew*.

In the course of the season, which ended about the 18th December, I had accepted an engagement for Mdlle. Titiens to sing at the San Carlo of Naples. The contract was made direct with the Prefect, at the recommendation of the "Commissione." The leading soprano engaged by the manager had not given satisfaction, and the "Commissione" had the power, before handing over the subvention, of insisting on the engagement of a capable artist so as to restore the fortunes of the establishment.

Naturally, then, on my arrival with the great prima donna every possible difficulty was thrown in our way. At length the *début* took place, when Titiens appeared as "Lucrezia Borgia." The vast theatre was crowded from floor to ceiling, the first four rows of stalls being occupied by the most critical "cognoscenti," who literally watched every breath and every phrase, ready in case of need to

express hostile opinions. At length the boat came on, and "Lucrezia" stepped on to the stage amidst the most solemn silence; and it was not until the close of the *cabaletta* of the first aria that the public manifested its approbation, when it seemed as if a revolution were taking place. Mdlle. Titiens' success went on increasing nightly, and the theatre was proportionately crowded.

I recollect on one occasion after I had made four or five applications to the Prefect for the money payable for the lady's services he handed me a cheque the size of a sheet of foolscap paper. The amount was £800 for her first eight nights' services. On presenting myself at the bank I was referred from one desk to another, until I was told that I must see the chief cashier, who had gone out to smoke a cigar, and would not return that day. I went again the following day, and after waiting a considerable time at length saw him, when he told me to go to a certain counter in the bank where I should be paid.

I endorsed the cheque in the presence of the cashier, who told me, however, that he could not hand me the money for it unless my signature was verified by the British Consul. On going to the British Consul I found that he had gone to Rome, and would not be back for a couple of days. At length I obtained the official verification of the signature, and presented myself for the seventh time at the bank, when I was invited by the cashier

to go down into the cellars, where a man told me off the amount in bags of silver ducats, which he drew from a large iron grating. He did not count the sacks he was giving me, but only those remaining behind ; which left me one bag short. This he did not care for ; he only wanted his own remainder to be right.

Eventually the manager of the bank insisted on my having the amount stated in the cheque, and I was then left to myself, surrounded by my bags, with no porters to move them for me.

On my returning to the manager, who was very polite, and telling him that I wished for the money in gold napoleons, he said it would be very difficult, and that in the first place I must hire men to carry the bags of silver up into the gold department. Thereupon I bargained with four ill-looking individuals who were brought in out of the streets, and who moved the bags at my risk to the gold department, when a vast premium had to be paid. On my leaving the bank with the gold I saw my four lazzaroni who had helped to move the silver, with hundreds of others, all extending their hands and following me.

I drove with difficulty to the British Consul, who happened to be a banker, followed by this vast multitude ; for such a sum of money had not been seen for a long time in or about Naples. I had now to pay another large premium to get a bill on London for my gold, and this concluded the matter,

which had occupied me altogether seven days and a half.

After the next payment had become due I went three or four times to the Prefect, but could never find him. One day, however, about twelve o'clock, I was told he was within, but that he had a headache, and could not see anyone. I nevertheless insisted on the necessity of his receiving me, saying that otherwise the night's performance at the San Carlo might be jeopardized. I was invited upstairs, where his Excellency was eating macaroni in the grand ball-room, lying on a sofa, which had served as a bed, he having returned home too late to mount the stairs, whilst about eighty Bersaglieri were rehearsing a selection from *Rigoletto* for a ball he was going to give that evening. The sound was deafening.

The Prefect was very polite, and gave me another of those large cheques, which with a little manipulation I induced the British Consul to change, and get me a bill for it. The Prefect invited me very courteously to the ball he was giving, at which over 2,000 persons were present. It was a most magnificent affair, the four angles of the large room being occupied by wild boars roasted whole (with sundry fruits, wines, etc.), to which the guests after every dance or two helped themselves, and then continued their dancing.

At that time I was very anxious to secure the lease of the San Carlo Opera-house, and by the aid

of my friend the Prefect so far advanced the matter, that it wanted but the sanction of the Minister at Turin to complete it. The pay-sheet of the orchestra contained over 150 names, but as the salaries varied from six to eight shillings a week I made no objection to this. The heaviest salary was that of the conductor Mercadante (composer of *Il Giuramento*, &c.), who received £5 a week.

On leaving Naples I went to Turin to present myself to the Marquis Braham, but before I could get my card forwarded, even to the first room, I was obliged to make a monetary advance. On reaching the second room I was referred to another room on the entresol. It was impossible to gain entrance, or even get my card sent further, without the help of a napoleon. On going into the fourth room another tax was laid upon me, and it being evening I thought it better to go home and reserve my money offerings towards meeting the Marquis Braham until the next day. I returned, armed with sundry five-franc pieces and napoleons; but it was not until the fourth day, when I gave an extra douceur, that I could approach him at all. It then appeared that someone had anticipated me, and I was recommended to wait another year. I left for England, and the matter dropped.

CHAPTER VI.

PRODUCTION OF GOUNOD'S "FAUST"—APATHY OF THE BRITISH PUBLIC—A MANAGERIAL DEVICE—DAMASK CRUMB CLOTH AND CHINTZ HANGINGS—HEROIC ATTITUDE OF A DYING TENOR—PRAYERS TO A PORTMANTEAU.

ON my return from Italy I set to work preparing for my grand London season of 1863, and entered into several important engagements. About this time I was told of an opera well worthy of my attention which was being performed at the Théâtre Lyrique of Paris. I started to see it, and at once decided that Gounod's *Faust*—the work in question—possessed all the qualities necessary for a success in this country. On inquiry I found that Mr. Thomas Chappell, the well-known music publisher, had acquired the opera for England. The late Mr. Frank Chappell, on the part of his brother, but acting in some measure on his own responsibility, had bought the *Faust* music for reproduction in England from M. Choudens, of Paris; and I have heard not only that he acquired this privilege for

the small sum of £40 (1,000 francs), but moreover that he was remonstrated with on his return home for making so poor a purchase.

The music of an opera is worth nothing until the opera itself has become known, and Messrs. Chappell opened negotiations with Mr. Frederick Gye for the production of *Faust* at the Royal Italian Opera. The work, however, had not made much impression at the Théâtre Lyrique, and Mr. Gye, after going to Paris specially to hear it, assured his stage manager, the late Mr. Augustus Harris, who had formed a better opinion of Gounod's music than was entertained by his chief, that there was nothing in it except the "Chorus of Soldiers." After due consideration Mr. Gye refused to have anything to do with *Faust*, and the prospect of this opera's being performed in London was not improved by the fact that, in the Italian version, it had failed at Milan.

Meanwhile I had heard *Faust* at the Théâtre Lyrique, and, much struck by the beauty of the music, felt convinced that the work had only to be fitly presented to achieve forthwith an immense success in London. Mr. Chappell was ready to give £200 towards the cost of its production, and he further agreed to pay me £200 more after four representations, besides a further payment after ten representations.

Certain that I had secured a treasure, I went to Paris and bought from M. Choudens a copy of the score, the orchestral parts, and the right for myself

personally of performing the work whenever I might think fit in England. I then visited Gounod, who for £100 agreed to come over and superintend the production of what he justly declared to be his masterpiece.

I was at that time (as indeed I always was when anything important had to be done) my own stage manager. My orchestral conductor was Arditì; Titiens undertook the part of "Margherita;" Giuglini that of "Faust;" Trebelli was "Siebel;" Gassier "Mephistopheles;" and Santley "Valentine."

Far from carrying out his agreement as to superintending the production of the work, Gounod did not arrive in London until nearly seven o'clock on the night of production; and all I heard from him was that he wanted a good pit box in the centre of the house. With this, for reasons which I will at once explain, I had no difficulty whatever in providing him.

One afternoon, a few days before the day fixed for the production of the opera, I looked in upon Mr. Nugent at the box-office and asked how the sale of places was going on.

"Very badly indeed," he replied.

Only thirty pounds' worth of seats had been taken.

This presaged a dismal failure, and I had set my mind upon a brilliant success. I told Mr. Nugent in the first place that I had decided to announce *Faust* for four nights in succession. He thought I must be mad, and assured me that one night's per-

formance would be more than enough, and that to persist in offering to the public a work in which it took no interest was surely a deplorable mistake.

I told him that not only should the opera be played for four nights in succession, but that for the first three out of these four not one place was to be sold beyond those already disposed of. That there might be no mistake about the matter, I had all the remaining tickets for the three nights in question collected and put away in several carpet bags, which I took home with me that I might distribute them far and wide throughout the Metropolis and the Metropolitan suburbs. At last, after a prodigious outlay in envelopes, and above all postage stamps, nearly the whole mass of tickets for the three nights had been carefully given away.

I at the same time advertised in the *Times* that in consequence of a death in the family, two stalls secured for the first representation of *Faust*—the opera which was exciting so much interest that all places for the first three representations had been bought up—could be had at twenty-five shillings each, being but a small advance on the box-office prices. The stalls thus liberally offered were on sale at the shop of Mr. Phillips, the jeweller, in Cockspur Street, and I told Mr. Phillips that if he succeeded in selling them I would present him with three for the use of his own family. Mr. Phillips sold them three times over, and a like success was

achieved by Mr. Baxter, the stationer, also in Cockspur Street.

Meanwhile demands had been made at the box-office for places, and when the would-be purchasers were told that "everything had gone," they went away and repeated it to their friends, who, in their turn, came to see whether it was quite impossible to obtain seats for the first performance of an opera which was now beginning to be seriously talked about. As the day of production approached the inquiries became more and more numerous.

"If not for the first night, there must surely be places somewhere for the second," was the cry.

Mr. Nugent and his assistants had, however, but one answer, "Everything had been sold, not only for the first night, but also for the two following ones."

The first representation took place on June 11th, and the work was received with applause, if not with enthusiasm. I had arranged for Gounod to be recalled; and he appeared several times on the stage, much, I think, to the annoyance of Arditì, to whom the credit of a good *ensemble* and a fine performance generally was justly due. The opinions expressed by several distinguished amateurs as to the merits of Gounod's admirable work were rather amusing. The late Lord Dudley said that the only striking pieces in the opera were the "Old Men's Chorus" and the "Soldiers' March;" which was going a step beyond Mr. Gye, who had seen nothing in the work but the "Soldiers' Chorus."

Another noble lord, when I asked him what he thought of *Faust*, replied —

“This demand is most premature. How am I to answer you until I have talked to my friends and read the criticisms in the morning papers?”

The paucity of measured tunes in the opera—which is melodious from beginning to end—caused many persons to say that it was wanting in melody.

The second night *Faust* was received more warmly than on the first, and at each succeeding representation it gained additional favour, until after the third performance the paying public, burning with desire to see a work from which they had hitherto been debarred, filled the theatre night after night. No further device was necessary for stimulating its curiosity; and the work was now to please and delight successive audiences by its own incontestable merit. It was given for ten nights in succession, and was constantly repeated until the termination of the season.

So successful was *Faust* at Her Majesty's Theatre that Mr. Gye resolved to produce it at once; and he succeeded in getting it out by July 2nd.

The following was the cast of the work at the Royal Italian Opera:—“Margherita,” Miolan-Carvalho (the creator of the part at the Théâtre Lyrique); “Siebel,” Nantier Didiée; “Mephistopheles,” Faure; “Valentine,” Graziani; “Faust,” Tamberlik.

The success of *Faust* at the Royal Italian Opera was so great that it enabled the manager to keep

his theatre open until long beyond the usual period. On the 15th May of the following year *Faust* was reproduced with Mdlle. Pauline Lucca and Signor Mario in place of Madame Miolan-Carvalho and Signor Tamberlik. Three weeks afterwards, June 7th, the part of "Margherita" was assumed for the first time by Adelina Patti.

Mr. Gye, who had purchased of M. Gounod "exclusive rights" over the work, sent to inform me that he did not wish to interfere with my arrangements during the season already begun, but that for each performance given at Her Majesty's Theatre he should expect in future to be paid, and that meanwhile he had a claim against me of £800 for performance of the work given in London and the provinces during 1863 and 1864. I, of course, resisted this extraordinary pretention on the part of Mr. Gye; for, as the reader has already been informed, I had, before producing *Faust*, purchased from the Paris publishers the right of performing it wherever I personally might think fit. Mr. Gye brought his action, of which the result was to establish the fact, painful enough for M. Gounod, that, owing to some defect in regard to registration, no exclusive rights of performance could be secured for *Faust* in England by anyone.

After the close of the season of 1863 I made a concert tour in the autumn, a recital of *Faust* being the chief attraction. The company comprised Mdlle. Titiens, Mdme. Trebelli, Mdlle. Volpini, Signor

Bettini—who had just married Trebelli—and Signor Volpini. After we had been out about two or three weeks Signor Volpini became very ill, and whilst at Birmingham sent for a leading physician, who, on examining him, said he would require a deal of attention, but that he hoped to bring him round in about a couple of weeks. The patient replied that on no account would he separate himself from his wife, who had to travel to some fresh city daily, but that the doctor must do what he could for him until he left the following morning with the Company. This he insisted upon doing.

From Birmingham we went to Bristol, and on arriving the sick tenor was at once put to bed and the leading physician sent for, who, on examining him, asked who had been attending him. On the name of the Birmingham physician being mentioned, the Bristol physician rejoined : “ A very able man. One of the very first in the profession.” The patient had been in good hands.

But on seeing the last prescription the doctor was astonished that his predecessor should have written such a thing; in fact, he could scarcely believe it, and it was fortunate for the patient he had left Birmingham and come to place himself under his care.

The patient informed the physician that on no account could he part from his wife, and that he would have to move off with the Company the following morning to Exeter.

From Exeter we went to Plymouth, from Plymouth to Bath, from Bath to Oxford, and so on during a space of some two or three weeks, the sick tenor being carried from the hotel to the railway and from the railway to the hotel, and each medical man of eminence making the same observations with regard to his esteemed colleague in the previous town; each one exclaiming that had Volpini remained in the previous city he must have died. He was carried to London, and there he remained, as all thought, on his death-bed, at the Hôtel Previtalli, Panton Square. He was not yet, however, destined to die, and, as I am about to relate, it was a miracle that saved his life.

About this time I had engaged Sims Reeves to sing the rôle of "Faust" on certain evenings at Her Majesty's Theatre, and one day received a telegram from the eminent tenor, dated "Crewe," expressing his astonishment that I had announced him for that evening, when the engagement was for the following one.

I at once went off to Sims Reeves's house, and learned from the butler that his dinner had been ordered for half-past seven o'clock. I thereupon informed the man that the orders had been changed, and that the dinner was to be served at twelve o'clock instead of the time originally fixed. I ascertained that Mr. Reeves was to arrive at Euston Station, and there met him, accompanied by Mrs. Sims Reeves.

While she was busying herself about the general arrangements, I got the tenor to myself and told him the difficulty I was in, to which he replied that it was quite impossible for him to sing that evening, as he had ordered his dinner at home. I at once explained that I had postponed it for a few hours, and that a light dinner was being prepared for him in his dressing-room at the theatre.

The suddenness of my proposition seemed rather to amuse him, as he laughed; and I was delighted to get a kind of half-promise from him that, provided I mentioned the matter to his wife, he would consent.

At this moment she appeared, asking me what I was talking about to her husband. One of us began to state what the object in view was, when she exclaimed —

“It’s all nonsense; but I can well understand. Mapleson is an impresario, and wants to ruin you by making you sing.”

She then asked me how I could possibly think of such a thing when the chintz and the crumbcloth of his dressing-room had not been fixed?

It was the custom of Mrs. Reeves to hang the walls with new chintz and place a fresh-mangled white damask cloth on the floor the nights her husband sang; and on this occasion the sacred hangings had gone to the wash.

I explained that I had provided other chintz, but to no effect. Reeves was hurried to his brougham

and driven away, his wife remarking as she looked scornfully at me: "He's only a manager!"

It being now half-past six I was in a nice state of mind as to how I could possibly replace the great tenor in *Faust*. Signor Bettini, it was true, had on the concert tour sung portions of the garden scene and the duet of the prison scene in the recital of *Faust* which we had given throughout the provinces. Signor Volpini, moreover—only he was on his death bed—knew the introduction and the trio of the duel scene. Putting all this together I decided on my course of action.

First I called on Signor Bettini, requesting him to oblige me by going to the theatre.

I next presented myself at Volpini's hotel, when I was informed that I must step very quietly and say but few words. On entering I was told by the invalid in a faint whisper that it was very kind of me to call upon him; and he wished to know whether I had really come to spend the evening with him. I told him that I had been informed on entering that my visit must be a short one.

He asked me again and again what could possibly be done to save his life, as he had tried all the doctors, but in vain. I said I would give him my advice if he would only follow it. I then assured him that he had but one chance of recovery. He must first allow me to mix him a pint of Chateau Lafite and a couple of raw eggs, beaten up with powdered sugar, and come down with me to the theatre, where,

after drinking it, if he was to die, he could die like a man before the footlights.

A faint smile came over his pallid countenance. Of course he thought I was joking. But in due course the Château Lafite appeared, and the eggs were beaten up, and I managed to make him swallow the stimulating beverage. I put him on his flannel dressing-gown, took the blankets off the bed, and, wrapping him up in them, carried him myself in a four-wheeler down to the theatre.

I explained to him that he would have very little to do, beginning simply with the few bars of the introduction; after that nothing but the music he had been in the habit of singing on the concert tour. I explained to him that although "Mephistopheles," the Prince of Darkness, would in the eyes of the public transform him from an old man into a young one, there would be no difficulty about this inasmuch as Bettini would continue the part. Later on he could sing the trio in the duel scene, where with his lovely voice a great effect would be produced.

The long and short of it was I induced him to dress; and all now seemed in good order. I explained the matter to Titians, Trebelli, and Arditì; and as I had not touched a particle of food since nine o'clock that morning, I went next door to Epitau's, where I ordered a very small repast, pending the commencement of the opera.

I had hardly seated myself at the table when my

servant rushed in, stating that there was a general row going on amongst the artists, and that they were all going home. The doors of the theatre had been opened, and the apology for the absence of Sims Reeves, which I had posted on the outer doors, had been accepted by the public. This was evident from the fact that over £650 of money was now in the house. The audience must be already a little irritated by the disappointment, and I knew that any further one might be attended with serious consequences. I believed that there would be a riot unless the representation took place.

On entering the stage-door I met Mdlle. Titiens, who was about to step into her carriage, going home. She told me it was useless to think of performing. This was at ten minutes past eight. I begged her to remain. I gave orders to the hall-keeper not to let anyone out of the place, and to get two policemen to assist him. I then crossed the stage to the dressing-room, where high words were going on—first between the two tenors, and afterwards between their two pretty wives. Mdlle. Volpini's voice was uppermost, and I heard her say to Trebelli—

“Of course you will rejoice! My poor sick husband brought out at the risk of his life, and then simply to undertake an old man's part, with grey hair and beard concealing his beauty; whilst your husband is to come on and make all the love in the garden scene, and get all the applause.”

Mdme. Trebelli responded by snapping her fingers at Mdme. Volpini, and taking her husband, despite my entreaties, from the theatre. All this excitement tended to work Volpini up ; and, like a true artist, he said he would do his best—even if he had to walk through the scenes in which he was unacquainted with the music—rather than let me be disappointed.

It was now half-past eight, and the opera was on the point of commencing. This I had ordered should be done punctually. Meanwhile I had followed Mdme. Trebelli to her apartments in Regent Street. The excitement had made her quite ill, and she was totally unable to appear in consequence. I appealed forcibly to her husband, begging him if he would not sing “Faust” to help me by taking the part of “Siebel.” He was a very good musician, and as at this time he never quitted his wife’s side I knew that he must be intimately acquainted with the music. I thereupon got him down to the theatre in time for the garden scene, had his moustache taken off, and put him into his wife’s clothes. Everything went off brilliantly, the male “Siebel” and the dying “Faust” sharing with the admirable “Margherita” the applause of the evening.

The sudden exertion, the unwonted excitement, had really the effect of saving Volpini’s life ; and he lived happily for many years afterwards.

During the worst stage of poor Volpini’s illness,

when, as already set forth, he persisted in being moved from town to town, wherever his charming wife had to go, they were both astonished one night to find that their little girl, a child of three or four years of age, had got out of bed, and apparently was praying to a large travelling trunk which accompanied them on all their journeys. Kneeling before the huge box, the little thing was heard to say: "And make my dear papa well again, or I will believe in you no more."

The explanation of this touching mystery was that the little girl had been in the habit of saying her prayers before an image of the Holy Virgin, which the family carried with them from town to town. The image, or picture, was now enclosed within the travelling trunk which had not yet been unpacked, and the affectionate child addressed it where she knew it to be.

CHAPTER VII.

GARIBALDI VISITS THE OPERA—GIUGLINI'S TROUBLE AT
ST PETERSBURG—GIUGLINI VISITED BY TITIENS—
ALARM OF FIRE—PRODUCTION OF "MEDEA"—GRISI'S
LAST APPEARANCE—AN ENRAGED TENOR.

IN 1864 my season opened brilliantly, and on the fifth night I induced Garibaldi, who was then in this country, to visit the theatre; which filled it to overflowing. On that evening Titiens and Giuglini really surpassed themselves; and at the close of the opera Garibaldi told me he had never witnessed such a spirited performance, and that he had been quite carried away by the admirable singing of the two eminent artists. The opera was *Lucrezia Borgia*.

Some few nights afterwards I placed Nicolai's opera, the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, before the public, under the name of *Falstaff*, introducing a charming contralto named Bettelheim; who undertook the rôle of "Mrs. Page," whilst Titiens impersonated "Mrs. Ford," Giuglini "Fenton," Bettini "Slender," Gassier "Mr. Page," Santley "Mr.

Ford," &c., &c. The magnificent new scenery was by Telbin. The opera met with most unequivocal success, and was repeated for several consecutive nights. But, as with so many other operas, the public were so slow in expressing their approbation that it gradually had to drop out of the *répertoire*. Shortly afterwards I produced, remounted, Beethoven's *Fidelio*, with Titiens as the heroine, which was given some seven or eight nights in succession to the most crowded houses. In the winter I gave my usual extra performances in the provinces and in London.

Prior to the close of the London season of 1864 Giuglini signed an engagement for St. Petersburg, receiving a very large honorarium for his services. Regarding himself as the only representative of "Faust," he had not taken the precaution of stipulating for his appearance in this, or, indeed, any other part in his *répertoire*. On his arrival he was much mortified to find the Covent Garden artists, of whom there were several, always working and intriguing together; and to Giuglini's great dismay the part of "Faust" was assigned to Signor Tamberlik; Patti being the "Margherita" and Nantier Didiée the "Siebel." Now passed some two or three weeks before Giuglini could obtain a *début*. One afternoon, about three o'clock, he was informed by the intendant that he was called upon to perform the rôle of "Faust," Tamberlik being taken suddenly ill. This was indeed good news, and he set about

arranging his costumes and looking over the music. Towards six o'clock he heard it rumoured that Madame Patti would be too indisposed to sing the rôle of "Margherita," and that he would have to appear with some *débutante*.

This thoroughly unnerved him, and he himself became indisposed, which he at once notified to the intendant. At the advice of some friends he was induced to take a walk, and pay a visit to some acquaintances to spend the evening.

About ten o'clock the door was rudely opened without any warning, and an *employé* entered, accompanied by two officials, one of whom politely raised his hat and said, "Signor Giuglini, I believe?" to which the Signor replied that he was Giuglini. They thereupon immediately left. Nothing more was heard of this matter until about a fortnight afterwards. It being pay day for the principal artists, that afternoon the Imperial Treasurer called at Giuglini's house with a roll of rouble notes, requesting him to sign the receipt for his month's pay, which Giuglini at once did. But on leaving, the treasurer begged to draw his attention to the notes, as a deduction of £150 had been made from his monthly stipend in consequence of his having left the house on the day he was reported to be indisposed. He got into a towering fit of rage, requesting the balance to be handed to him, as he was allowed certain days of indisposition according to the terms of his contract. The treasurer replied

that according to the provisions of that clause he should have remained at home in his house on the day of his reported illness. The arguments became very warm, and Giuglini, in a fit of rage, threw the whole bundle of rouble notes into the stove, which was then burning ; and from that moment his reason seemed to have left him.

On the termination of my spring concert tour in 1865 we began a season of opera in the beginning of March at Dublin, Giuglini promising to join us at the conclusion of his St. Petersburg engagement, which ended about that time.

One morning at breakfast I received a telegram from London : " Come on at once. Giuglini arrived." I was indeed delighted, and, having notified the good news to the Dublin press, left immediately for London. On my arrival at Giuglini's house in Welbeck Street I was told that he was very much indisposed in consequence of the fatigues of the journey, and that his mind did not seem quite right. I went upstairs to him at once. He was very pleased to see me, but to my astonishment he had no trousers on. Otherwise he was all right.

I talked with him some time, and advised him to put on the necessary garment, so that we might start that evening for Dublin. By force of persuasion I at last obtained his consent to let me put his trousers on for him, and in the course of an hour succeeded in getting one leg in. I then ordered some oysters for him, and talked to him

whilst I was coaxing in the other leg. This I at length managed to do, when to my horror I found the first leg had come out again. After wasting the whole of the day I found myself too late to catch the Irish mail, and the Signor still with one leg only in his pantaloons.

Whilst Giuglini was sleeping I inquired as to the full particulars of his condition, and was informed that he had arrived from St. Petersburg in charge of a hired courier, who simply wanted a receipt for him. At the same time his magnificent fur coats and other costly clothing were all missing. He had made the journey in second-class, wearing a summer suit although it was the depth of winter; and on examining his jewel case I found that the stones had been taken out of everything he possessed, although the articles themselves were there. It was indeed a sad affair. I was advised to place him for a short time under the care of Dr. Tuke, and I had then to hurry back to Ireland.

On my return to London I went to pay Giuglini a visit at Chiswick, Mdlle. Titiens insisting on accompanying me. We waited some time during which we were particularly cautioned not to approach him. At length he entered; he was delighted to see us and talked quite rationally. We persuaded the doctor to allow us to take him for a drive, the signor at the same time expressing a wish to be driven to the Star and Garter, at Richmond, to dine. To this the keeper, who was on the box alongside

the coachman, objected, promising Giuglini that if he would return to the doctor's he should have a nice large plate of meat, which seemed greatly to please him. Giuglini had previously complained to me that he was made to drink sherry, a wine which he particularly disliked, his ordinary drink being claret or claret and water. He afterwards sang us "Spirto gentil" from the *Favorita*, followed by "M'appari" from *Martha*, singing both airs divinely. The only thing peculiar was that his tongue was drawn very much to the right, and that he had to stop after every ninth or tenth bar to straighten it.

When we got back to the doctor's Mdle. Titiens and myself stayed to dinner. During the repast Giuglini, who had been looking forward to his plate of meat, came into the room exhibiting on a very small plate a very small piece of meat.

"Look what they have given me, Thérèse," he said to Titiens. "I am afraid to eat it," he added, in a tone of irony; "it might give me an indigestion."

My firm belief is that if I could have got both Giuglini's legs into his trousers the day that he arrived in London I should have saved him. Living something like his ordinary life, among his old companions, he would have had at least a chance of getting well.

Thus matters went on until the London season of 1865 opened, which took place on the Saturday night of the Easter week. I had made a series of

improvements throughout the theatre, by reducing considerably the number of the private boxes, and enlarging those I retained. I likewise removed the twelve proscenium boxes, ten each side of the stage, thereby advancing the drop curtain some 16 feet nearer the public. This gave me much more room behind the scenes.

Amongst the new singers I introduced was Miss Laura Harris, who afterwards, as Mdme. Zagury, achieved brilliant success throughout the whole of Europe; also Mdle. Ilma de Murska, a lady who at once took high rank from her phenomenal vocal qualities. I also presented Signor Foli, a young artist, who was engaged at the Italian Opera in Paris, and who soon became a public favourite; likewise Signor Rokitanski, another eminent basso. Despite the blow I had received in the loss of Giuglini I went to work with renewed energies, and presented to the public Beethoven's *Fidelio*, with a magnificent cast, including Titiens, the incomparable "Leonora." I, moreover, mounted in great style Mozart's *Flauto Magico*, Titiens being the "Pamina," Ilma de Murska the "Queen of Night," Sinico the "Papagena," and Santley the "Papageno;" whilst the subordinate parts were all undertaken by principal artists.

During the last act an accident occurred, which might have been very serious, inasmuch as the house was crowded from the stalls right up to the back of the gallery. In preparing for the final scene some

of the gauze, which had been used for clouds during the evening, caught fire over the gas battens. Instantly the alarm was given, when one of the flymen, at the risk of his neck, flung himself across the stage, balancing himself on a "batten" (a narrow strip of wood, some forty feet long), while he cut the ropes with his knife, causing the burning gauze to fall down on to the stage, where it was extinguished by the firemen. Mr. Santley, who was undertaking the *rôle* of the "Bird-catcher," remained on the stage unmoved. He walked forward to the audience, and addressed them in these eloquent words —

"Don't act like a lot of fools. It's nothing."

This speech had an immediate effect; and Santley continued his song as if nothing had happened. But for his presence of mind the loss of life would have been most serious.

I likewise produced Cherubini's tragic opera, *Medea*; a work considered by musical amateurs one of the finest dramatic compositions ever written. No musician ever exercised more influence on his art than Cherubini. His compositions are of the first authority, so that no musical library, whether of the professor or the amateur, can claim to be considered complete without them. The part of "Medea" was represented by Mdlle. Titiens. In assuming this *rôle* Mdlle. Titiens certainly added the final touch of lustre to her lyric crown. I need scarcely say the opera was magnificently mounted,

even to the smallest detail. It was particularly successful, and still retains its place in the *répertoire*. I was interested to find in what large numbers the relatives and descendants of Cherubini were attracted to my theatre by the announcement of his *Medea*. Naturally they all expected free admissions, even to great-grandchildren and third cousins.

The season was a very successful one. In the autumn I started the regular provincial opera tour, Mario being my principal tenor, *vice* Giuglini. We commenced in Manchester, where Mario's unrivalled performances in *Faust*, *Rigoletto*, *Martha*, *Ballo in Maschera*, and *Don Giovanni* attracted crowded houses. We afterwards visited Dublin, proceeding thence to Belfast, Liverpool, etc., terminating, as usual, about Christmas.

In the early part of January, 1866, I made a very successful concert tour, giving no less than one hundred and twenty concerts in some seventy cities in sixty successive days, with two very strong parties: Titiens, Trebelli, Santley, Stagno, and Bossi in one; and Grisi, Lablache, Mario, Foli, and Arditì in the other; ending up with a brilliant series of operas with casts combined from the two parties in the northern capital and at Glasgow, where Mdme. Grisi distinguished herself in the rôles of "Lucrezia Borgia," "Norma," "Donna Anna," etc.

Thus matters went on until the London season. On each occasion when I visited Giuglini I found no improvement, and it was ultimately decided that

a sea trip might benefit him. He, therefore, left London in a sailing ship for Italy. I never saw him afterwards. I need scarcely add that his loss was irreparable.

I opened my London season of 1866 early in April, for which I engaged a very powerful Company, including Mdme. Grisi. I announced her engagement in the following terms:—

“Mr. Mapleson has the gratification to announce that he has prevailed on Mdme. Grisi to revisit the scene of her early triumphs, and again to appear at the Theatre, her previous connection with which formed one of the most brilliant epochs in operatic history. Mdme. Grisi will once more undertake some of the parts which she created, and in her impersonations of which will be revived the traditions obtained direct from Rossini, Donizetti, and Bellini. These representations can only extend for a few nights, and they will derive additional interest from the fact that Mdlle. Titiens has consented to take part in them as a mark of respect to one who for so many years reigned absolutely without a rival on the lyric stage.”

I was justified in making this announcement in consequence of the magnificent style in which Mdme. Grisi had been singing during our spring opera tour,

Grisi seemed interested and affected by her return to the old house of which she had taken leave twenty years previously. The old *habitués* came in

large numbers to see her, to hear her, and naturally to support her with their applause on her first (which proved also to be her last) appearance. This took place on the evening of May 5, 1866. The Prince and Princess of Wales were both present.

When the gondola came down, from which, in the first act of *Lucrezia Borgia*, the heroine makes her entry, there was breathless attention throughout the house. The great vocalist had the command of all her resources, and sang the two verses of "Com'ò bello" admirably, omitting, according to her custom, the *cabaletta*, which Titiens and all other "Lucrezias" made a point of giving.

Well as she sang, I noticed some signs of nervousness. She had been visited by misgivings before the performance began. I had done my best, however, to reassure her, and was under the impression, judging from the apparent result, that I had succeeded. But her hands, I remember, just as she was going on, were extremely cold. I took them in my own, and found that they were like stone.

At the end of the first act, on the conclusion of the scene in which "Lucrezia" is taunted and reproached by her victims and their friends, Mdme. Grisi, accustomed to the stage of the Royal Italian Opera, remained too far in front, though at a point where, at Covent Garden, the curtain would have fallen between her and the audience. It was otherwise at Her Majesty's Theatre (I refer, of course, to the old building), where the stage advanced far into

the audience department; and when the curtain came down the "Lucrezia" of the evening found herself kneeling on the ground (in which attitude she had defied the conspirators) and cut off by the curtain from the stage behind. This placed the unfortunate singer in a ludicrous and, indeed, painful position; for she had a stiffness in one of her knees, and was unable on this occasion to rise without the help of the stage attendants.

Mdme. Grisi was, of course, much distressed by this *contretemps*. She had recourse, however, to the homeopathic remedies which she always carried with her, and after a time was herself again. These remedies were for the most part in the form of stimulants, which, however, Mdme. Grisi took only in the smallest quantities. Her medicine-chest contained a dozen half-pint wicker-covered bottles, which held, besides orgeat and other syrups, brandy, whisky, hollands, port-wine, and bottled stout.

In the second act Mdme. Grisi got on very well, especially in the scene with the bass preceding the famous trio. In the passionate duet with the tenor, just when the Duke, after administering the poison to "Gennaro," has gone away, she made an unsuccessful attempt to reach the A natural; and the failure caused her much confusion. She got through the performance; but she ran up to me immediately the curtain fell and exclaimed that it was all over with her, and that she never could appear again.

The notices next morning were sufficiently favourable ; but it was evident that the career of the great vocalist was now, indeed, at an end. Let me here say a word about Mdme. Grisi's pecuniary affairs.

After the duel between her husband, M. de Melcy, and Lord Castlereagh a separation took place ; and the injured spouse made an arrangement by which he was to receive out of his wife's salary the moderate income of two thousand a year. This she was to pay as long as she remained on the stage. In order that the famous singer might enjoy the use of her own earnings, I made an agreement with her by which on my provincial tours she was to sing for me gratuitously, while I at the same time engaged to pay Signor Mario £300 a week. For this salary the two admirable artists were ready to sing as often as I liked. They were most obliging ; full of good nature, and without any of the affectation or caprice from which so few singers at the present day are free. They took a pleasure in their performances, and thought nothing of playing three or four times a week. They would have sung every night had I been unreasonable enough to ask them to do so.

Far from insisting that she should never be called upon to do anything that was not expressly set down for her in her written contract, Mdme. Grisi would often volunteer her assistance in cases where it was really very useful. In *Don Pasquale*, for instance, while Mario was singing the beautiful

serenade "Com'e gentil!" she would direct the chorus behind the scenes, singing herself and marking the time on the tambourine.

She was invaluable to Mario in many ways, not only in connection with his art, but also with the occupations of his ordinary life. She was always punctual, and, indeed, a little before the time; whereas Mario was invariably late. He had always his cravat to tie or a fresh cigar to light just when the last moment for catching the train had arrived. He was the most inveterate smoker I ever knew. He had always a cigar in his mouth, except when he was on the stage and actually in the presence of the audience. When he came off, if only for a moment, he would take a puff at his still burning cigar, which he had carefully left in the wings where he would be sure to find it again. "Faust" in the garden scene passes for a few moments behind some bushes at the back of the stage. During those moments Mario had just time to enjoy a few whiffs, after which he returned to continue his love-making.

Mario spent large sums of money on his favourite weed, and thought nothing of giving away a box of cigars to a friend for which he had paid (to some friendly tobacconist who had cheated him) £5 or £6 a hundred.

About this time I charged Mr. Telbin and his talented sons to paint me the whole of the scenery for Meyerbeer's *Dinorah*, which was brought out in

due course, Ilma de Murska appearing as the demented heroine, Gardoni as "Corentino," and Santley as "Hoel." It was a truly magnificent performance, well worthy the reputation of the theatre.

Shortly afterwards I produced another classical opera, which was gladly welcomed by all musical amateurs. The work I refer to was Gluck's *Iphigenia in Tauris*—a work not less remarkable for its intrinsic merits than for having been the cause of one of the most fierce and prolonged artistic controversies on record. Paris, ever the *champ de bataille* of such contests, was, figuratively speaking, shaken to its foundations by the antagonistic Gluckists and Piccinists; and the dispute was only ended by Gluck leaving France.

This work was likewise magnificently put upon the stage, Titiens, Santley, and Gardoni really surpassing themselves.

I afterwards had the honour of introducing Mozart's comic opera, *Il Seraglio*, in which Mdlle. Titiens appeared as "Constanza," the remaining personages being entrusted to Dr. Gunz, Signor, Stagno, Rokitanski, &c.

One evening, when the opera of *Rigoletto* was being performed, with Mongini as the "Duke," feeling tired, as I had been working in the theatre throughout the day, I went home just before the termination of the third act. I had been at home about three-quarters of an hour when my servant

hurried up in a cab to inform me that the curtain had not yet risen for the final act, and that a dreadful disturbance was going on in consequence of some question with Mongini, who was brandishing a drawn sword and going to kill everybody. I immediately slipped on my clothes and went down to the theatre.

At the stage door, without her bonnet, I met the tenor's charming wife, the only person, as a rule, who could control him in any way ; and she entreated me not to go near him, or there would be bloodshed. I insisted, however, on going to his room without delay, as the curtain was still down and the public was getting tumultuous. I took the precaution of buttoning my overcoat across my chest, and in I went, my first words being --

"This time, Mongini, I hear you are right (*Questa volta sento che avete ragione*)."

With this preliminary we got into conversation, but he still remained walking up and down the room with nothing but his shirt on and a drawn sword in his hand. I saw that I had to proceed very slowly with him, and began talking on indifferent matters. At last I asked him the details of all the trouble. He thereupon explained to me that the master tailor, who had been requested by him in the morning to widen his overcoat by two inches, had misunderstood, and contracted it by two inches. I wished to have a look at the dress, which, however, was lying on the floor torn to

pieces. I assured Mongini that the man should be cruelly punished, and he and his family put upon the streets to starve early the next morning.

He then got calmer, and I casually observed, "By-the-bye, is the opera over yet, Mongini?" to which he replied, "No, it is not."

"Never mind that," I continued; "the public can wait. Everyone, by the way, is talking of the magnificent style in which you have been singing to-night."

His eyes brightened, and he said he should like to go on with the opera.

"Not at all a bad idea!" I remarked.

"But I have no dress," said Mongini, rather sadly; "it is destroyed."

I suggested that he should wear the dress of the second act, putting on the breastplate and the steel gorget with the hat and feathers, and he would then be all right, and "*La Donna e Mobile*" would make amends for the delay. He dressed and followed me to the stage, when I made the sign for the stage manager to ring up the curtain, greatly to the astonishment of Mongini's wife, who was fully expecting to hear that I had been run through the body.

The next day at twelve o'clock, as per appointment, Mongini came to my office to be present at the punishment of the master tailor. I had taken the precaution to inform the tailor, who was a single man, that he had a wife and four children, and that

he was to be sure and recollect this. I called him into my room in the presence of Mongini, and told him gravely that he with his wife and children must now starve. There was no alternative after the treatment Mongini had received the previous evening.

Mongini at once supplicated me not to let the children die in the gutter, as it might injure him with the public, and he ended by promising that if I would retain the tailor in my service he would sing an extra night for nothing.

CHAPTER VIII.

PAYMENT AFTER PERFORMANCE—DISCOVERY OF MADGE ROBERTSON—MARIO AND THE SHERIFF—GENEROSITY OF THE GREAT TENOR—DÉBUT OF CHRISTINE NILSSON—DESTRUCTION OF HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE—A GREAT PHILANTHROPIST.

AT the close of the London season of 1866 we went to Ireland for the usual autumn operatic tour, stopping *en route* at Liverpool to give a morning concert. The rush was so great that all the metal cheques for the half-crown seats were exhausted and we had to use penny pieces. Numbers of the public found out, therefore, a ready way of getting in without payment. As soon as I observed this, and as there were still many hundreds unable to obtain admission, I conducted them across to another door which led into the orchestra. There being no money-taker, I let some four hundred of them crowd in, impressing upon them that they would have to pay half-a-crown apiece as they came out ; and I must add that every one paid up punctually.

We left Liverpool after the concert for Dublin, where we fulfilled a very profitable engagement.

After leaving Dublin we went, early in October, to Leeds, and afterwards to Hull, at which latter place I recollect well that a full rehearsal of *Les Huguenots* was necessary in consequence of a new "Queen" having joined the company. Both Mario and Titiens complained of the incident and wondered how they were to finish the rehearsal in time to dine by a quarter past three, it being a general rule with artists not to eat later than that hour when they have to sing the same evening. We began the rehearsal early; and it was not until after two that it was concluded. The dinner being nearly ready at the hotel, I went in a carriage to fetch Mario and Titiens back from the theatre without loss of time. At a quarter past three I found them both seated in the stalls, witnessing a morning performance, at which a Miss Madge Robertson was playing in a piece called *A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing*. So rivetted to the spot were Titiens and Mario—both exclaiming "Do not disturb us, let us wait a little longer"—that it was nearly five o'clock before I got them home, when it was, of course, too late to dine. Not that they regretted this. They both told me that I ought to write to every London manager telling them what a charming actress they had discovered. I need hardly say that the Miss Robertson of those days is now Mrs. Kendal, more perfect in her art than ever.

I again started my concert tour in the early part of January, 1867, with Titiens, Trebelli, and others; and was as usual pre-eminently successful all along the line. Mario joined us about the 7th March in Scotland.

About this time he experienced considerable worry through being served with various writs for bills of exchange, for which he had received no consideration whatever, and which had been accumulating for many years. In more prosperous times preceding the period in question he had frequently assisted young artists, painters, sculptors, and Italians generally, who had come to this country with recommendations to him, and who had nearly all proved most ungrateful. It was computed that over £40,000 had been distributed by the great tenor on various occasions amongst his compatriots and others seeking aid.

I recollect meeting at Fulham one Sunday at dinner a young sculptor who had arrived with a letter of recommendation to Mario, and who on presenting himself exclaimed that he had not come to borrow money, hearing how much victimized Mario had been by others. All he wanted was to bring a piece of sculpture from Rome to London, for which he already had a purchaser in view; and if Mario would but accept a bill at two months, which he then had with him, he would within a month have sold his work and the money could be put to Mario's credit, so that the bill would be

punctually met. In fact, every possible device was resorted to by persons well acquainted with his generous nature—which brings me to the case in point.

We had gone through a most arduous tour, and Mario had been singing four times a week throughout the whole time, and with most brilliant voice. As he had sung four nights running during the week I am speaking of, and was to be replaced the following evening (Saturday) by Signor Tasca in the *Huguenots*, he devoted his last day to the packing of his luggage, intending to leave by an early train for York, whence, after a night's rest, he would go on to London, presenting himself on the Monday for rehearsal at the Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden, where the season was to commence on Tuesday.

In the hall at the Edinburgh Hotel, where Mario had put up, a Sheriff's officer was waiting for him with a writ or an attachment for £100; and I thought to help him out of the dilemma by the following device, knowing how delicate and sensitive he was. I called to bid him good-bye, taking with me a closed envelope containing a £100 note. I by degrees gave him to understand that I had been looking about the city for some little souvenir, but without success, and as his taste was so superior to mine, if he would select one in memory of the pleasant time we had spent together, I should feel obliged. I at the same time handed him the envelope. I was on the point of leaving the room when

a note was brought to me, requesting me to come to the theatre at once, as Tasca, the new tenor, had been taken ill at the rehearsal, and was obliged to go home. Mario, noticing signs of displeasure across my brow, insisted upon knowing the reason; and after some pressure I informed him that the new tenor, who was to replace him, had fallen sick, and that I must be off to see how the matter could be remedied.

My dear friend patted me on the shoulder, and said he knew of a way. The opera to be performed being *Les Huguenots*, for the benefit of Mdle. Titiens, he would try, he said, to satisfy the public in the part of "Raoul," and thus help me out of my difficulty. I readily acceded, and asked him to name any terms he liked; but he assured me that he should consider himself amply repaid if I would be present at Covent Garden on the following Tuesday, when he was to appear as the "Duke" in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, as that would encourage him. I thanked him, and was again leaving when he called me back to express his displeasure at my having offered him the hundred-pound note in the envelope, requesting me at once to take it back. This I, of course, declined to do, until at last he said—

"If no one is to have it, it had better go into the fire; but sing I do not unless you allow me to return it to you at once."

All argument was useless. Then reluctantly I left him.

The following Monday night I started for London,

where I attended the opening of the Royal Italian Opera the next evening, and had the pleasure of applauding Mario, and complimenting him in his dressing-room, after the second act. He could not express sufficiently his delight at my being present.

The London season of 1867 was remarkable for the first performance in England of Verdi's *Forza del Destino*.

Prior to the commencement of this season my attention had been drawn to a young Swedish singer, named Christine Nilsson, who had appeared at the Théâtre Lyrique of Paris, and was attracting a certain amount of attention. I went over and heard her in the *Magic Flute*, and was delighted with the purity of her voice. She was also singing *La Traviata* and *Martha*. I at once concluded an engagement with her.

Before disclosing the fact to Arditi, or any other member of my Company, I invited Mdlle. Titiens and Mdme. Trebelli, with Signor and Mdme. Arditi, over to Paris for a fortnight's holiday prior to the commencement of our laborious London season. Amongst the places of amusement we visited was the Théâtre Lyrique, where the Swedish singer was that night filling the rôle of "Martha." I must say I was not impressed myself, whilst the remainder of the party thought nothing whatever of her. I, therefore, refrained from even hinting that I had already engaged her. As the time approached, the lady insisted on making her *début* as "Martha." I plainly foresaw

that it would be the greatest possible mistake to acquiesce in her desire; and, after a lengthy discussion, Verdi's *Traviata* was decided upon. I at once instructed a Bond Street dressmaker to make her four of the most elegant toilettes possible, discarding *in toto* the costume of the 16th century so far as "Violetta" was concerned.

At all times it is a difficult thing for a manager to employ with advantage assistants placed among the audience to support either a new singer or a new piece; for grave mistakes are sure to be made, thus defeating the object for which the supporters were intended. I have often known singers send in friends to applaud; but they invariably begin their uproar on the appearance of the singer, even before he or she has uttered a sound.

On one occasion I recollect at Her Majesty's Theatre a singer appearing in *Il Trovatore*, and about a dozen bouquets falling at her feet from the top boxes before she had sung a note.

I saw that great judgment was necessary, while convinced in my own mind that I possessed a jewel of the first water. I, therefore, gave the very simplest instructions as to the amount of encouragement necessary for my fair Swede in order to ensure the rapture of London; knowing that when once serious attention had been drawn to her she could do the rest herself on her own merits. Being very fond of rowing in my spare time on the River Thames, I made an arrangement with the head-boatman at

Essex Stairs, near where I resided, to supply me with some twenty-five horny-handed watermen, who were merely told that they should receive one shilling apiece provided they did *not* applaud Mdlle. Nilsson—the lady who would appear on the stage at the beginning of the opera, wearing a pink dress. They were moreover informed that when the first act was over and the curtain down, they would be paid a shilling apiece for each time they could get it up again; and I believe they succeeded some five or six times in their repeated attempts. That was all that was ever done for Mdlle. Nilsson; her extraordinary talent did the rest. At all events, it gave her a fair start, and her *début* was the talk of London.

Mdlle. Nilsson's performances were continued throughout the season with increasing success, she appearing successively as "Martha," "Donna Elvira," and the "Queen of Night" in the *Magic Flute*. She repeated the *Traviata* again and again, bringing the season to a most brilliant termination.

After a short holiday I recommenced my regular autumn tour in Dublin, repeating the usual Liverpool morning concert with the usual success.

After visiting Liverpool and Manchester, I returned to London and opened my season on the 28th October.

In consequence of my having engaged a female harpist I received a round Robin from the orchestra, threatening to leave at the end of the week unless I at once replaced her by a male performer. I insisted

on receiving the week's notice to which I was entitled, and, seeing evidence of a conspiracy, took out a summons against every member of my orchestra. On the day fixed for the hearing the musicians excused themselves, through their solicitor, from appearing, their case not being ready. Afterwards I myself was unable through indisposition to appear on the day to which the case had been adjourned. At this there was much groaning among the defendants, and threats were uttered. The Trade Unions were very active just then throughout the country, and the players had been promised unlimited support towards maintaining their menaced strike. At last the case was heard ; but on the very day before the one fixed by the Magistrate for giving his decision an occurrence took place which rendered all further proceedings in the matter unnecessary.

Towards the end of November an insurance agent called upon me urging the necessity of effecting an insurance on my properties, scenery and dresses, which had been accumulating since the beginning of my tenancy. I replied that in consequence of the high rate of premium it was better to let things take their chance. Besides, there was no probability, under my management, of the theatre ever being destroyed by fire. Eventually we came to terms as to the rate to be charged.

About this time a proposition was made to let the theatre to Professor Risley for his Japanese performances, to run from Christmas to February. A

large sum of money was to be paid to me, and it was verbally agreed that my treasurer should be retained by the new-comers to superintend the front of the house and the monetary arrangements.

On the 7th December, during a rehearsal of *Fidelio*, my insurance agent called to complete the insurance. I showed him the inventories of the different departments, and agreed to insure for £30,000 ; but as the costumier's list was not at hand, and the costumier himself was out at dinner, the agent suggested my giving him £10 on account and keeping the matter open until the following Monday, when he would call again. Just as he was leaving the room my treasurer came in, stating that he had just heard that the Japanese people did not intend to avail themselves of his services after he had given them all the information respecting the working of his department.

I asked whom they *had* engaged. He mentioned the name of Mr. Hingston, at which I started, and said —

“If Hingston is engaged, good-bye to the theatre. It will make the fifteenth that will have been burnt under his management.”

On hearing this, the insurance agent stepped across the room and again suggested that I should hand him the £10 to keep me right till Monday.

I jokingly said: “There is no fear;” and he took his departure.

I remained working in my office at Pall Mall

until about six o'clock that evening. As I was engaged to dine at Mdle. Titiens's in St. John's Wood, I had but a few moments to put my head into the box-office, which was just closing, and ask Mr. Nugent for some opera tickets for the following night. I did not, according to my custom, go through his office on to the stage (which I might have done while he was getting out the tickets), fearing I should be too late for the dinner.

About half-past eleven o'clock that evening our party was alarmed by a violent ringing of the bell. Then my servant rushed in with his clothes very much torn, uttered some inarticulate sounds, and fell on a chair, pointing upwards. On looking out of the window we saw that the sky was bright red, although we were four miles from the fire. Mdle. Titiens and Signor Bevignani exclaimed with one voice: "It's the theatre!"

I hastened down at once, accompanied by Bevignani, only to find impassable barriers of soldiers and populace, and it was not without great difficulty I could approach the building. On my pointing out to the firemen certain doors which they ought to break open in order to recover wardrobes, music, &c., I was told to "mind my own business." They then went to quite another part and began chopping and breaking, whereas had they allowed themselves to be guided by me they might have saved a considerable portion of my property. It was not until three hours afterwards that the fire reached that

part of the theatre which I had pointed out as containing things which might have been saved.

Lord Colville was very kind, and with his assistance I reached one portion of the building, to which he accompanied me, enjoining me to save engagements or any important documents in my private rooms at Pall Mall. But I was so bewildered that all I could do was to seize a dress coat and an opera hat, with which I came downstairs, leaving all my papers and documents on the table. I remained until two or three in the morning. Then, my presence being useless, I went home to change my clothes, which were freezing on me, and next hurried to Jarrett, my acting manager.

Jarrett was in bed. But he had already heard of the calamity, and expressed great regret. I desired him at once to go over to Chatterton, the then lessee of Drury Lane, who resided in the neighbourhood of Clapham, and endeavour to secure his theatre from March till the end of July before he could hear of my disaster.

“Go as quickly as possible,” I said, “and if the newspaper is lying about be careful he does not see it.”

On arriving at Chatterton's the first thing Jarrett saw, lying on the hall table, was the *Times* newspaper. He threw his top coat over it, and waited quietly downstairs until Chatterton, who was dressing, could receive him. Then, like the able diplomatist he was, without appearing at all anxious, he concluded a short agreement whereby

I was to have the use of Drury Lane for the following spring and summer seasons, with a right to renew the occupation for future years. By half-past nine o'clock Mr. Jarrett was able to hand me the agreement, and it was not until half-past ten that Mr. Gye drove up to Mr. Chatterton's to inform him of the disaster Mapleson had met with, and at the same time to offer him £200 per week provided he did not let Drury Lane for Italian Opera.

The day after the fire I received letters of sympathy from all parts of the country; likewise telegrams of condolence, including one from Her Majesty the Queen, which greatly affected me. In fact, my nerves were so unstrung that I was hardly master of myself. In the course of the next day His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales came to see me. I showed him over the ruins of what the day before had been the Opera-house. After his departure I was so unnerved that I took to my bed in the adjoining hotel, and remained there some two weeks.

The Monday after the fire the insurance agent, with whom I had neglected to do business, called upon me to assure me of his deep sympathy, since if I had paid him the £10 on account of the proposed insurance he would now have had to give me a cheque for £30,000. I told him that I was exceedingly glad I had not paid him the £10, as I certainly should have been suspected of having myself caused the fire, and should never afterwards have been able to set myself right with the public.

Prior to my recovery, amongst the numerous callers was one particularly sympathetic gentleman, who came in a carriage and pair, and said he would see that the theatre was rebuilt, asking, as it were, my permission for this. I was deeply touched by his kindness. Some short time afterwards he wrote saying that he thought it better, for my sake, that Covent Garden should be closed, and that he had seen Mr. Gye and made terms for its purchase. On a later occasion he called upon me, and stated that the site of Her Majesty's Theatre, which had then been cleared by Lord Dudley, being such a desirable one, he was in treaty with the Bank of England to lease it to them at a considerable ground rent, they erecting the building. By this means, he explained, the £80,000 then lying in consols for the purpose of re-erecting the theatre could be handed over to me. But he ultimately consented that I should give him half.

Notwithstanding all my troubles, within three weeks after the fire I was already on the road with a strong concert company for the usual spring tour; all my spare time being utilized in the creation of a new wardrobe, music library, etc. Whilst at Manchester Mdle. Titiens aided me kindly in the purchase of various goods, stuffs, cottons, needles, etc., etc.; all the prime donne of the Company volunteering their services as dressmakers in order to have everything ready for my Opera season, which was to commence early the following month in Glasgow.

Being under the belief that this fire had cancelled the contract I had already made at the Theatre Royal, Glasgow, I got entangled, in my mistake and hurry, into an engagement at another theatre, the Prince of Wales's; and as the time approached for my coming to Scotland both managers threatened me with an attachment if I did not fulfil my engagement. In fact, I found myself announced at both houses, with war to the knife threatened by the two rival managers. At one time they proposed to combine against me and leave me, with my expensive Company, outside in the cold. But about ten days before the date fixed I paid a visit to each, when, out of consideration for me personally, they both agreed to have me alternately at their theatres. This caused great excitement in the city, and as the adherents of each manager mustered in force the receipts at both houses were very great, so that eventually each manager had taken more money in the half number of representations than he would have received had I given him the full number.

Prior to the opening of my London season of 1868 I received another visit from my philanthropic friend, Mr. Wagstaff. He told me that he had purchased Mr. Gye's interest, showing me the agreement, and he considered that it would be more desirable that Covent Garden for the future should be run by a Company, of which I should be the manager, receiving some £20,000 cash as a consideration for my goodwill and for any property I

might have in music or other effects, with a salary of £3,000 a year as long as I chose to retain my post, and a fair share in the profits.

I became quite uncomfortable at having so much wealth suddenly thrust upon me, and wished I were back in my old position of trouble and anxiety. In due course all the necessary documents were signed, Mr. Gye at the same time writing a letter to a high personage, in which he stated that his long-sought desire to quit the cares of management had at length been satisfied, and strongly urged that all patronage should now be transferred to me, as the shattered state of his health would preclude him for the future from taking part in operatic affairs. On entering upon my duties I began to reorganize the establishment by, in the first place, relieving myself of some sixty old choristers who had been engaged from time immemorial, and introducing in their stead my fresh, full-voiced young Italians whom I had imported the previous year.

One evening a card was brought to me from a young gentleman, the son of an old musical friend of mine, requesting an interview. He told me that he had been promised the secretaryship of the Grand Opera (meaning Her Majesty's and Covent Garden, united under the new arrangement) for seven years at a salary of £800 a year, provided he lent £200 for a month to my philanthropic friend, who had organized the whole thing. It appeared to me like a dream. I could not understand it; but still, as nothing astonishes me in this world, I took

it as a matter of course, and later in the day went over to Wandsworth to call on Mr. Gye, in order to see how matters stood.

On my entering, Mr. Gye said how pleased he was to leave operative management for ever, and that he wondered how he had found the nerve to continue it so long. Before I could say a word to him, he desired me to be seated and handed me a cigar, when he began to inform me of his plans for the future. He told me he had secured by private treaty a vast estate in Scotland of some 20,000 acres, with the right of shooting and fishing. He was arranging, moreover, to purchase a large estate in Oxfordshire. Various guns had been ordered, with fishing rods and other appurtenances. Steps, too, had been taken for the sale of the house in which he was then living.

I made two or three attempts to get a word in, but without success; and at last I had scarcely the courage to hint that the projected arrangements might, possibly, not be carried out.

I explained, however, that on the following Monday a small payment of £10,000 would be due to me; also that a further deposit on Drury Lane would become payable, and that I should make that deposit, as it was probable, nay, very possible, that I should be called upon to resume my position at Drury Lane, instead of Covent Garden. I at the same time recommended Mr. Gye at all events to be prepared to open Covent Garden, as it wanted but some three or four weeks to the beginning of the season. This

he replied he could not do, as the deposit he was to receive would not be payable before some three or four weeks. He still, moreover, doubted all I had been telling him.

On the Monday following I attended at the Egyptian Bank, which had been specially hired for the occasion, and on entering with my order for the payment of £10,000, found one small boy seated on a very high stool, drawing figures on a sheet of blotting paper. On my demanding £10,000 the boy turned deadly pale and was at first inclined to run. I explained to him that it was not his fault if the money was not forthcoming, but I requested him, in the presence of a witness I had brought with me, to present seven letters which I already had in my pocket, each one containing notice to the Directors that, they having failed to pay me my money at the appointed time, my contract as general manager was at an end. I at once informed Gye of what had occurred, recommending him again to get his Company together and re-engage Costa and the orchestra, as my own prospectus was to come out the middle of that week.

From what I afterwards learned, the £200 my musical friend's son was to have advanced prevented some thousands of circulars from being posted for want of stamps, and the printer from delivering the remainder of the circulars he had prepared for want of a deposit. I must add that Mr. Gye repeatedly thanked me for my straightforward con-

duct in preventing him from being practically ruined.

Considerable changes were necessary in adapting the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, for Italian Opera. I was obliged to have sundry discussions with the Committee before I could be allowed to alter the floor of the pit and boxes, and to take about twenty feet off the stage, its removal enabling me to add some two or three rows of stalls. I had, moreover, to decorate, clean, and carpet the house from top to bottom, the outlay for which, irrespective of the rent, cost me from £3,000 to £4,000. A further difficulty presented itself, as there were some six or seven hundred renters who were at that time allowed free admission to any part of the theatre, and it was only by temporizing with their representatives that I ultimately made an equitable arrangement satisfactory to all parties.

The season opened in due course, and a magnificent Company I was enabled to introduce: Mdlle. Titiens, in the zenith of her powers; Christine Nilsson, who had made such a prodigious success the previous season at Her Majesty's; also Miss Clara Louise Kellogg, Mongini, Fraschini, Santley, etc. The performances were really of the first order, and Mozart's masterpieces were given with such strong combined casts as to attract the whole of London. In fact, the success was such as to paralyze the efforts of the rival manager.

CHAPTER IX.

PROPOSAL FOR AN OPERATIC UNION—TITIENS IN DUBLIN—
HER SERVICES AS A PACIFICATOR—AUTUMN SEASON AT
COVENT GARDEN—THE COMBINATION SEASON—IM-
MENSE SUCCESS—COSTA'S DESPOTISM—AN OPERATIC
CONSPIRACY—LUCCA AND HER HUSBANDS.

DURING my successful Drury Lane season, in the month of June, 1868, a letter addressed to me was left by an unknown person in the hall. The superscription on the envelope was in a disguised hand, but the letter enclosed was in the writing of Mr. Gye.

The manager of the Royal Italian Opera proposed a coalition with the manager of Her Majesty's Theatre, and Mr. Gye suggested a personal interview on the subject. Here, however, is his letter:—

[COPY.]

“Springfield House,

“Wandsworth Road,

“June 19th, 1868.

“DEAR MR. MAPLESON,

“The last time you were over here I believe we were pretty well agreed that our interests lay rather in the combination of the two

operas than in fighting one another. As we shall both of us be making our engagements for the next year, if anything is to be arranged between us it is time it were thought about. I should be very glad to see you on the subject if you still remain in the same mind as when I saw you last. It would perhaps be well if we did not meet either at Drury Lane or at Covent Garden. Would you mind coming over here, or would you prefer our meeting somewhere in town? This matter, for obvious reasons, had better remain strictly *between ourselves* for the present.

“Yours very truly,

“ (Signed) FREDERICK GYE.

“James Mapleson, Esq.”

When I met Mr. Gye by appointment his first proposition was that we should work together at either of the two theatres, the other one being kept closed; and that I should take a quarter of the profits.

I suggested, as a more equitable adjustment, an equal division of profits; and to that Mr. Gye at last agreed.

Articles of partnership were then drawn up binding us to remain together for three years on the basis of half profits, and our agreement was to be kept secret for the next six months.

At the close of my engagement at Dublin, in the beginning of October, 1868, a great demonstration

took place in honour of Mdle. Titiens, it being the last night of the season. Weber's opera of *Oberon* was performed, and after Titiens had sung the exacting air of the third act, "Ocean, thou Mighty Monster," a most animated scene took place, many requiring the great air to be repeated, whilst others called out the names of different Irish songs. The uproar lasted upwards of fifteen minutes before silence could be restored, when it was decided that "The Last Rose of Summer" should be given.

But the orchestra had no music and the conductor would not venture a performance without it. Further delay and further uproar took place, until at length Signor Bettini, who had undertaken the rôle of "Oberon," came from the wing, pulling on a cottage piano, whilst Titiens helped the conductor to get out of the orchestra in order to accompany her. As Bettini was turning the piano round, in consequence of the slope of the stage it fell right over, causing an immense cheer from the gods, when no less than five demons (who were to appear in the next scene of *Oberon*) rushed from the wings to raise it up again on its legs. At length order was restored, and such was the silence that when Mdle. Titiens was on the point of beginning the beautiful air I remember taking a pin from my collar and dropping it on the stage in order to give a practical and effective illustration of the old saying that you "could hear a pin drop."

No sooner had the singer finished the last verse

than a roar of admiration was heard, so loud, so overpowering, that I can only compare it to the belching forth of huge pieces of artillery. At the close of the opera a great crowd, composed of the public and the medical students who habitually occupy the gallery (always without their coats, sometimes without their waistcoats, occasionally without their shirts), was awaiting the Queen of Song's departure. They had actually cut the traces of her carriage, and from a ship chandler's opposite had got two long coils of rope which they fastened to the vehicle. Titiens shortly afterwards appeared, amidst deafening cheers, and the procession started. No less than a dozen of the singer's most enthusiastic admirers were on the roof letting off fireworks. All went on in something like order until with our two long strings of volunteer horses we arrived at Dawson Street, when, in consequence of no previous arrangement having been made, one half of the team went up Dawson Street and the other half down Nassau Street, the result being a violent collision against Morrison's Hotel. It was not without considerable difficulty and delay that things could be readjusted.

On our arriving at Shelbourne Hotel the police found themselves powerless to cope with the multitude. But we had been accompanied by a young man, who, standing on the carriage step, had repeatedly addressed Mdlle. Titiens both in German and in French, telling her that she had "nothing to

fear." On arriving at the door of the Shelbourne he gave a shrill whistle as a call for volunteer special constables, when a passage was at once cleared. It being a wet night the enthusiasts around us made a carpet for Titiens to walk on by throwing their coats on to the pavement. The crowd remained opposite the hotel for over an hour, during which time repeated calls were made for a song. But the gas of Mdlle. Titiens's sitting-room had been turned low, and the blinds being drawn down she hoped it might appear that she had retired for the night.

Shortly afterwards, however, a deputation came up accompanied by one of the chief constables, stating that if madame could not disperse the crowd the consequences would be very serious, as it refused to move. She at last felt compelled to go to the window of her hotel, when, after entreating for silence, she addressed the crowd in these words : "I will sing you 'The Last Rose of Summer' provided you promise to go home immediately afterwards like mice."

And sure enough they did, for at the conclusion of the song the crowd melted away in dead silence, not one person being left.

The inspector afterwards remarked to Mdlle. Titiens that if ever a revolution broke out in Ireland they would send over for her to quell it.

During the stay of my Opera Company at Dublin I allowed some of the principal artists to sing in

various churches for charitable purposes. Mdlle. Titiens's services were sought for far and wide, and she was always ready to devote her Sunday, which was the only day of rest she had during the week, to the cause of charity. On one occasion I recollect her singing in a poor neighbourhood near Thomas Street, when many persons actually stooped to kiss the ground where she had trodden. She was held in the highest esteem by the clergy.

One Saturday evening, after the termination of the opera, several of my Italian choristers were wending their way home when they were accosted by some rowdy, good-natured Irishmen, who insisted upon having a drink with them. They, not comprehending the language, thought the men were robbers, and placed themselves in a position of defence, whereupon they were boldly attacked by the sons of Erin, and a free fight ensued, in which some two or three Irishmen got stabbed. About noon the following day it was notified to me that some four or five of my choristers were in prison on account of this serious affair, and would be kept there until the wounded men, who were then in hospital, were sufficiently recovered to appear against them. I at once sought Mdlle. Titiens's aid, who went with me to one of the priests, with whom we afterwards visited the prison where our choristers were. They insisted that it was only a small affair, and that they had defended themselves against their aggressors.

They seemed also in great distress because the

police authorities had taken away their week's salary which they had in their pockets, together with such pieces of jewellery or keys they had about them. By the advice of the priest we afterwards visited the hospital, and I, accompanied by the surgeon, inspected their wounds, which were triangular, as if caused by an Italian stiletto.

My clerical friend was very kind, and after a deal of whispering with the hospital surgeons, and afterwards with the wounded men themselves, he stated that they might have done it in accidentally falling down, but that it was not their intention to appear against the choristers, who were afterwards bailed out by Mdle. Titiens. They duly appeared the next morning at the police-court and were dismissed, no one appearing against them.

I omitted to inform the reader that on the conclusion of the partnership agreement with Mr. Gye, which was to be kept a secret for the next six months, I rented the Royal Italian Opera for the autumn of 1868 for this double reason: first, that Her Majesty's Theatre was in ashes, and that I had no place wherein to give my autumn performances; and secondly, that my being seen about Covent Garden would in that case cause no surprise, whilst it would enable me occasionally to meet Mr. Gye in order to discuss our coming arrangements.

During my autumn season at Covent Garden I discovered Mdle. Scalchi, the eminent contralto—then singing at a building which had been a

circus. Struck with the lovely quality of her voice I engaged her for five years, events fully confirming my judgment on that occasion. About this time I first brought to this country Miss Minnie Hauk, a young singer about 18 years of age. She made her *début* at Covent Garden as "Amina" in *La Sonnambula*, her next part being that of "Cherubino" in Mozart's *Nozze di Figaro*.

After due discussion with Mr. Gye it was decided that our joint enterprise should be carried on at the Royal Italian Opera pending the rebuilding of my new theatre.

As the time for opening the season approached Mr. Gye suggested that we should ourselves make all engagements with the orchestra, instead of leaving that duty, as heretofore at the Royal Italian Opera, to Mr. Costa. This famous conductor was a despot, not only in the musical direction of his orchestra, but in other ways. He made his own engagements, and, leaving, of course, the manager to pay the appointed salaries, took care to be always present on pay day; when, in the case of any shortcoming on the part of a musician, he would stop a portion of the salary payable to him, if not the whole amount. It was his custom to arrive at the theatre half-an-hour before the time fixed for the beginning of the evening's performance. He then took up a position as if of inspection, and, as he sat on the stage, the players passed him one by one as if in order of review. I remember on one occasion a

young violinist arriving with mud on his boots, and in a frock coat. Costa pulled him up short, and asked him how he could venture to present himself in such a condition. The musician replied that he had just arrived from the Crystal Palace, and had not had time to make his toilet.

“Go home instantly,” said Costa, “and come back with clean boots and in evening dress.”

By the time the violinist (who lived in some distant suburb) got back the second act of the opera was nearly over; and when on pay-day the offender presented himself for his monthly salary he was informed that by reason of his absence on the occasion in question one week’s salary was stopped. This sort of treatment the musicians had to put up with, or, as the only alternative, to accept their dismissal, which really meant the loss of the provincial festivals and of the Sacred Harmonic Society.

It must be added in favour of Costa’s despotic ways that he never allowed any musician that he had engaged to be replaced by a substitute, even at rehearsal; a practice which in orchestras less severely governed has become only too frequent, to the great detriment of the performances.

Costa, meanwhile, by mere force of will, had gained so much authority at the Royal Italian Opera that the manager feared him, and was most anxious to be rid alike of his services and of his tyranny.

When it was intimated to Costa that the joint managers proposed to reserve to themselves the

right of making direct engagements with the musicians for the orchestra, he would not hear of such an arrangement, and, much to Mr. Gye's satisfaction, resigned his post.

In view of the new works we proposed to give, and of the large number of rehearsals that would be required, two conductors were now engaged, Arditi and Vianesi.

Long before the theatre opened we had abundant signs of a prosperous season, and as the event drew near money poured in from various sources. We received in private subscriptions as much as £12,000. The booksellers' subscriptions amounted to £29,000 more, and in the course of the season the box-office sales alone brought in another £29,000. Altogether, counting profits from the Floral Hall concerts and sums received for the services of singers at public as well as private concerts, we received during the season of 1869 a grand total of £80,000.

On the other hand, we paid away in artists' salaries £22,000; for working expenses (including chorus), £13,000; orchestra, £7,500; sundry charges, £2,000.

Our whole expenditure came to £44,000, leaving us a clear profit of about £36,000.

Out of my half-share of this profit I had to pay for insurance and poor rates £3,000. Against this Mr. Gye put the use of the theatre, which was his property.

By our articles of partnership Mr. Gye had stipulated that he should "take no part in the management of the theatre unless he wished to do so." This wish came upon him after about a fortnight.

Our success during this season proved that though two rival Italian Operas can scarcely be carried on without loss on both sides, one Italian Opera can be made the source of very considerable profit. Even, however, with a monopoly there are two things essential to success. The operatic manager who would prosper must appeal to the public with a very strong Company, and with new works. Such casts as we secured for some of the recognized master-pieces of dramatic music could not fail to fill the theatre.

Among the new works or revivals produced at the Royal Italian Opera during the season of 1869 may be mentioned: *Fidelio*, *The Magic Flute*, *Robert le Diable*, Cherubini's *Medea*, *Hamlet* (first time in England), with Nilsson as "Ophelia," and *Don Bucefalo* (also first time in England). *Medea* had before been given at my own establishment with Mdlle. Titiens in the tragic part of the heroine. In *Le Prophète*, Titiens and Mongini appeared together, Titiens, of course, as "Fidès," Mongini as "John of Leyden." *Don Giovanni* was played with Titiens as "Donna Anna," Nilsson as "Donna Elvira," and Patti as "Zerlina;" while the part of the dissolute hero was taken by Faure, and that of "Don Ottavio" by Mario.

About this time the secret oozed out that Mr. Jarrett, who had come with me from Her Majesty's Theatre to the Royal Italian Opera, had made engagements with Mongini, Ilma de Murska, Trebelli, Christine Nilsson, Santley, Foli, Faure, and Arditi. Mr. Jarrett, who in after years became known as the agent of Mdme. Nilsson, and especially of Mdle. Sarah Bernhardt, held at that time a post with vague duties attached to it at the Royal Italian Opera, as previously at Her Majesty's Theatre, which during the combination season of 1869 was being rebuilt. Jarrett also acted as agent to Mongini, Ilma de Murska, Trebelli, and Bettini—Mdme. Trebelli's husband. Many years before he had been in partnership with Mr. George Wood, representing the firm of Cramer and Co., the well-known music publishers, for the direction of an Opera Company, and had been left by his associate in the lurch, Mr. Jarrett being called upon to meet single-handed liabilities which would have been far too much even for the partners combined.

Nor was Jarrett particularly well disposed towards the manager of the Royal Italian Opera, in whose orchestra he had once played the horn, and who in one of those orchestral strikes so common in the history of Opera-houses had taken a leading part as against the manager. Mr. Gye had thereupon dismissed him; and he now objected to have in his employment an agent receiving percentage on the salaries of his singers.

If, then, in the opposition he proposed to organize against the Royal Italian Opera Jarrett injured Mr. Gye, he would not be sorry; while if as a result of a failure at Drury Lane he injured Mr. Wood, he would be very glad. Naturally, however, he worked chiefly with a view to his own success.

Whether Wood mistrusted Jarrett, or whether after entering into partnership with him he mistrusted the success of the project, can never be decided; but it is certain that after securing Drury Lane Theatre for an operatic campaign, Mr. Wood repented of what he had done, and, unknown to Jarrett, entered into negotiations with Mr. Gye.

The advantages of an operatic monopoly were too obvious for Mr. Gye not to be anxious once more to secure it. This he was prepared to do, even at a considerable sacrifice; only it was I, his associate, not he himself, who was to make it. He proposed to me that Mr. George Wood should be taken into partnership, and that the profits for the season should be thus divided: Half to Gye, one quarter to Mapleson, one quarter to Wood. Mr. Gye was ready at that time to take in any number of partners who seemed in a position to threaten his justly-cherished monopoly, provided always that their share in the profits came to them out of my half, not out of his. For me the smallest fraction was deemed sufficient; he himself, however, could accept nothing less than a clear moiety.

After some amusing negotiations between Mr.

Gye and myself, it was arranged that Mr. Wood should be taken into the concern on a basis of equal shares. Each, that is to say, was to receive one-third of the profits. The seceding artists, whose services we could not wish to lose—apart from the effect they might have in creating against us a formidable opposition—had all signed with Mr. Wood; and by the new arrangement these vocalists (Christine Nilsson, Mongini, Ilma de Murska, Trebelli, Faure, Santley, etc., with Arditi) were all to form part of the Royal Italian Opera Company. Our profits would still be large, though both Gye and myself would have to cede a portion of our gains to the new-comer.

Mr. Gye, Mr. Wood, and myself were all seated round a table in Mr. Gye's private room at Covent Garden Theatre, on the point of signing the contract which was to bind us together for the season of 1870, when suddenly a gentle tap at the door was heard, and, like "Edgardo" in the contract scene of *Lucia*, Jarrett appeared. He had, as he afterwards informed me, entirely lost sight of Mr. Wood, who was supposed to be out of town, gone abroad, anywhere except in London; whence, however, he had not stirred. Jarrett had not traced his slippery partner to the Royal Italian Opera. He assured me that having no indications whatever to act upon he had come there guided simply by instinct. He was a man whose instinct seldom misled him.

While Mr. Gye and myself were a little surprised

at the sudden apparition, Mr. Wood was lost in confusion. Jarrett meanwhile was absolutely calm. Standing at the door, he took a pinch of snuff, and for a few moments remained silent. Then, addressing his partner, he simply said : " Mr. Wood, can I have a minute's conversation with you outside ? " Mr. Wood rose, and left the room, but returned in less than a minute, when Gye whispered to me : " It is all right ; he is sure to sign. " But when he was asked to put his name to the document which only awaited his signature to constitute a perfect contract between him, Gye, and myself, he hesitated, spoke of the necessity in which he found himself of first consulting his friends, and finally did not sign.

The conversation which had taken place outside the room, as it was afterwards repeated to me by Jarrett, was short and simple.

" The singers you have engaged, " said Jarrett, " are under contract to sing at Drury Lane, and nowhere else. If, then, you join Mapleson and Gye they will not come to you at Covent Garden, and you will have to pay their salaries whether you open at Drury Lane or not. "

Wood could only reply that he would not sign with Mapleson and Gye.

There was no money made that season at the Royal Italian Opera ; whilst Mr. Wood's season at Drury Lane was simply disastrous. The moneyed partner soon proposed to shut up ; but Jarrett, to

whom Mr. Wood was bound, would not hear of this.

"I have no more money," said Wood.

"But you have a number of pianofortes," replied Jarrett. "You have music shops here and in Scotland whose contents and goodwill can be sold."

"You wish to ruin me?" asked Wood.

"You did not mind ruining me in 1854," answered Jarrett, "when we carried on Opera together and you left me to bear the burden of your losses."

It is bad enough for a manager to lose money, hoping night after night that by some new and successful stroke, or some change of taste on the part of the capricious public, the tide of luck may at last turn in his favour. But Mr. Wood had no such sanguine delusions to maintain him in his adversity; his losses were irretrievable. They increased as the season went on without any chance of being even arrested; and in the end anyone but a man of Mr. Wood's indomitable energy and courage would have been ruined beyond hope of recovery.

During the Wood season at Drury Lane many interesting performances were given, including Wagner's *Flying Dutchman*, with Ilma de Murska as the heroine and Santley as the hero; *Mignon*, with Mdme. Christine Nilsson; also Weber's *Abu Hassan*, each for the first time in England. But the enterprise could not stand against the superior attractions of the Royal Italian Opera, while the Royal

Italian Opera, on its side, suffered in its receipts from the counter attraction presented by Drury Lane.

Towards the end of the season, war having been declared between France and Germany, Mdme. Pauline Lucca became anxious about her husband, who was an officer in a Prussian cavalry regiment, and now under campaigning orders. She was anxious, therefore, to see him before his departure with the army moving towards the French frontier. Some weeks afterwards, at the battle of Mars la Tour, a portion of the Prussian cavalry was sacrificed in order to hold in check the French, who were seeking to leave Metz in order to march towards Paris. Mdme. Lucca's husband, Baron von Rhaden, was dangerously wounded in the charge; and the Baroness received special permission to visit him in the field hospital, where he was lying, outside Metz. Another officer of the same regiment, also wounded, came in for a good share of her attentions; and afterwards, being at that time in the United States, she applied in the New York Courts for a divorce from Baron von Rhaden in order to marry Baron von Wallhofen, the officer, who—as just mentioned—had, like Von Rhaden, been severely wounded at Mars la Tour. The New York Tribunal granted the divorce on Mdme. Lucca's simple affidavit; and before her husband (No. 1) had had time to reply by a counter affidavit from Berlin the second marriage

had been celebrated. Such being the case the decree of divorce, so hastily pronounced, could not well be interfered with. So, at least, said the judges to whom the matter was referred; and Mdme. Pauline Lucca remained as she is now, Baroness von Wallhofen.

CHAPTER X.

GYE'S FRATERNAL EMBRACE—LAW-SUITS INTERMINABLE—
DISSOLUTION OF PARTNERSHIP—RETURN TO DRURY
LANE—ARRIVAL OF ALBANI—DÉBUT OF CAMPANINI—
THE ANNUAL ONSLAUGHTS OF MR. GYE.

I soon found that Mr. Gye, on the principle of embracing *pour mieux étrangler*, had taken me into partnership in order to stifle me at his ease.

In the early part of June, 1869, Mr. Gye suggested to me that it would be very desirable to renew my lease of Her Majesty's Theatre in order to get rid of a provision in the existing one, under which the Earl of Dudley had the power to determine it in the month of February in any year. Gye expressed his intention of seeing the Earl of Dudley on the subject, and at this interview it was agreed that the Earl should grant a new lease for seven, fourteen, or twenty-one years, Mr. Gye requesting that it should be granted either to himself alone or to Gye and Mapleson conjointly. The Earl decided the latter to be more desirable, requesting that the

new lease should be signed on or before the 1st September. In due course we were informed that the lease was ready for signature.

As the duration of my partnership with Mr. Gye was only for three years (one of which had already nearly expired), I naturally desired to know what my position would be at the expiration of the partnership if we were joint managers of Her Majesty's Theatre for twenty-one years; as it appeared to me that it would leave him in command of a monopoly at the Royal Italian Opera, whilst I on my side, unable to perform Opera at Her Majesty's Theatre, would be called upon to pay half the rent of the building, which meantime would remain closed. I, therefore, took the precaution, when the day arrived for approving the draft lease, to append the following words:—"I am willing to execute the enclosed lease in conjunction with Mr. Gye upon the understanding as between him and me that our acceptance of the lease is not to affect in any way our relative rights under the articles of partnership. We shall respectively have the same rights under the proposed new lease as we now have or are subject to in respect of the subsisting lease under the articles of partnership, and on determination of our partnership this lease shall be exclusively vested in me for the residue of the term, I indemnifying Mr. Gye and his estate against any future liability for rent and covenants, or obtaining his release from the same."

This gave great umbrage to Mr. Gye, who thereupon refused to affix his signature to the lease.

In the meantime, the 1st of September (the date stipulated by the Earl for signature) having passed, Mr. Gye contended that by attaching a condition to my signing of the lease I had not accepted the lease at all. Besides, therefore, refusing to sign the joint lease, he insisted upon having a lease of Her Majesty's Theatre for himself alone. A deal of correspondence and trouble took place about this time, which I will not weary the reader with, and hundreds of letters passed between us and our solicitors. It was threatened, in short, that the lease would be granted by the Earl of Dudley to Mr. Gye alone, to my exclusion. I was, therefore, compelled in my own defence to file a bill in Chancery, making Mr. Gye and the Earl of Dudley defendants, to restrain them from carrying out their plan.

I ultimately, however, terminated our joint relations with more haste than I perhaps should have shown in consequence of the abject despondency, together with absolute physical prostration, into which Mr. Gye had been thrown through the turn lately taken by operatic affairs. As he lay exhausted on the sofa there seemed, indeed, but little chance of his ever rising again to take part in the active business of life. He could scarcely speak. He was pale, agitated, and such was his feverish condition that it was necessary from time to time to apply wet bandages to his forehead. In his state of exhaus-

tion, combined with a certain nervous irritability, it seemed cruel to delay the signature he so much desired; and the effect of my putting pen to paper was, indeed, to cause him instantaneous relief. Never before did I see such a change. His despondency left him. He rose from the sofa, walked about with an elastic step, a cheerful air, and had he been anything of a vocalist would, I feel sure, have sung.

By the terms now agreed to between Mr. Gye and myself I was freed from all outstanding claims upon the theatre, and received a payment in money. I at the same time agreed to withdraw the Chancery proceedings against Dudley and Gye.

Immediately afterwards I set about forming a Company for my provincial operatic tour of 1870; also renting Covent Garden from Mr. Gye for the autumn, as I found it impossible to obtain Her Majesty's, being informed by Lord Dudley's solicitors that it had been let to Mr. Gye. The ensuing spring I returned to my old quarters at Drury Lane, my first act being to secure the services of Sir Michael Costa, who forthwith began forming his orchestra, whilst I went to the Continent in quest of vocal talent. I will not trouble the reader about my provincial opera tour, which, as usual, was very successful indeed; nor with my spring concert tour of 1871, with Titiens, Trebelli, Santley, Foli, and other eminent artists.

I opened my London season of 1871 under brilliant auspices, the Prince of Wales having taken a box

as well as all the leading supporters from the old house. About this time I secured the services of Mdlle. Marimon, who drew enormous receipts, but unfortunately fell sick after the third night. It was only on rare intervals that she appeared again during the season. I, however, got safely through; producing several standard works, under the able direction of Sir Michael Costa, in addition to a revival of *Robert the Devil*, also *Semiramide*, with Titiens and Trebelli, who in this work always drew crowded houses. I also produced *Anna Bolena*. The season finished up satisfactorily, and I was glad to get a fortnight's well-earned rest prior to my autumn tour of opera, which was pre-eminently successful. I returned to London to take up my autumn season afterwards at the Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden, which terminated early in December, after which I gave a few concluding operatic performances at Brighton.

Early the following year I again started on my spring concert tour; during which I gave 48 concerts in 48 cities in 48 days, followed by a spring opera season at Edinburgh.

I have omitted to state that prior to the opening of my successful Drury Lane season of 1871, the Earl of Dudley became the plaintiff and Mr. Gye the defendant with regard to Her Majesty's Theatre. Finding I was at Drury Lane, and in open opposition to the Royal Italian Opera, Mr. Gye did not seem to think it desirable that he should execute

the lease; whereupon Lord Dudley took proceedings against Gye for £7,500, as arrears of rent for Her Majesty's Theatre.

About this time Jarrett, in reply to my constant applications, informed me that Mdle. Nilsson was about to be married, and, in fact, that her future husband had already arrived in America, but that he, Jarrett, had succeeded in inducing her to give four performances the next season prior to the marriage, which was to be postponed until the following year. He explained in his letter that as her performances were to be limited to four I was not to complain of the only terms he could get the lady to assent to; namely, £200 for each representation. He explained that £800 would be the total sum; "and what," he asked, "is that where thousands are concerned, in addition to the prestige it will give to your house, as well as the influence on the subscription list?" I thereupon authorized him to close the matter for the season of 1872.

About this time my attention was drawn by my friend Zimelli, the manager of the theatre at Malta, to a most charming young soprano, who he assured me was destined to take a very high rank; and about the same time I received a letter from a regular subscriber to the house, a distinguished officer, pointing out the excellence of this young lady. I at once opened negotiations which ultimately led to favourable results. Colonel McCray, I may add, had written to me from Florence on the

same subject. The name of the young singer was Emma Albani; and having, as I thought, secured her services—positively promised in a letter written to me by the lady—I found myself deprived of them by Mr. Gye; who I find, now that I look back on the past, paid me an attention of this kind—sometimes greater, sometimes less—regularly every year.

On her arrival Mdlle. Albani was to sign the contract; and as soon as she got to London she, with perfect good faith, drove to what she believed to be my theatre. She had told the cabman to take her to the manager's office at the Italian Opera. She was conveyed to the Royal Italian Opera, and, sending in her card to Mr. Gye, who had doubtless heard of her, was at once received. On Mdlle. Albani's saying that she had come to sign the contract which I had offered her, Mr. Gye, knowing that I never made engagements but with artists of merit, gave her at once the agreement she desired.

To do Mr. Gye justice I must here mention that after the contract had been signed he, in the frankest manner, avowed to Mdlle. Albani that he was not Mr. Mapleson, for whom she had hitherto mistaken him. He explained to her that there was a manager named Mapleson who rented an establishment somewhere round the corner where operas and other things were from time to time played; but *the* opera, the permanent institution known as such, was the one he had the honour of directing. If, he

concluded, Mdlle. Albani was sorry to have dealt with him she might still consider herself free, and he would at once tear up the contract.

Mdlle. Albani, however, was so impressed by the emphatic manner in which Mr. Gye dwelt on the superiority of his theatre to mine that she declared herself satisfied, and kept to the contract she had signed. Colonel McCray called on me soon afterwards to beg that out of consideration for the lady I would give up the letter in which she declared herself ready to sign with me. I assured him that I had no intention of making any legal use of it, but that I should like to keep it as a souvenir of the charming vocalist who had at one time shown herself willing to be introduced to the London public under my auspices.

Why, it may be asked, as a simple matter of business—indeed, as an act of justice to myself—did I not take proceedings for an enforcement of the agreement which Mdlle. Albani had virtually contracted? I, of course, considered the advisability of doing so, and one reason for which I took no steps in the matter was that Titiens, Nilsson, Murska, and Marimon were members of my Company, and that even if Mdlle. Albani had come to me I should have found it difficult to furnish her with appropriate parts.

The young lady duly appeared at Covent Garden about the beginning of April in *La Sonnambula*, and at once achieved a remarkable success, which

caused me very much to regret the loss of her. She afterwards appeared as "Elsa" in *Lohengrin* in an Italian version, which had been made for me by Signor Marchesi, husband of the well-known teacher of operatic singing, and himself an accomplished musician.

I had ordered from Signor Marchesi as long before as 1864 an Italian version of *Tannhäuser*, which I duly announced in my prospectus for that year, but which I was dissuaded by some critical friends, who did not believe in Wagner, from presenting to the public. I had been advised, and there was certainly reason in the advice, that if I had quite decided to run such a risk as would be necessarily incurred through the production of an opera by Wagner (whose *Tannhäuser* had three years previously been hissed and hooted from the stage of the Paris Opera-house) I should at least begin with his most interesting and most attractive work, the poetical *Lohengrin*. Accordingly, reserving *Tannhäuser* for a future occasion, I determined to begin my Wagnerian operations with the beautiful legend of *Elsa* and the Knight of the Swan; and I commissioned Signor Marchesi to execute such a version of *Lohengrin* as he had previously given me of *Tannhäuser*—a version, that is to say, in which, without any departure from the meaning of the words or from the forms of the original versification, the musical accents should be uniformly observed.

But in England the laws relating to dramatic property seem to have been made for the advantage only of pirates and smugglers. I had printed the Italian translation of *Lohengrin* which Signor Marchesi had executed for me, and for which I had paid him the sum of £150. But I had not secured rights of representation in the work by going through the necessary farce of a mock performance before a sham public; and anyone, therefore, was at liberty to perform a translation which in any country but England would have been regarded as my property. How Signor Marchesi's translation of *Lohengrin* got into Mr. Gye's hands I do not know. But the version prepared for me at my cost was the one which Mr. Gye produced, and which somehow found its way to all the Italian theatres.

It has amused me in glancing through the history of my operatic seasons since 1861 to see how persistently Mr. Gye endeavoured by some stroke—let us say of policy—to bring my career as operatic manager to an abrupt end.

In 1861, when at Adelina Patti's own suggestion I was engaging a Company and taking a theatre with a view to her first appearance in England, he entangled her in an engagement by means of a fifty-pound loan.

In 1862, just when I was on the point of opening Her Majesty's Theatre, the late Mr. Augustus Harris, Mr. Gye's stage manager and adviser on

many points, approached Mdlle. Titiens with an offer of a blank engagement.

In 1863 Mr. Gye's insidious but unsuccessful advances towards Mdlle. Titiens were repeated.

In 1864 Mr. Gye having, as he pretended, bought exclusive rights in *Faust* over my head, tried by means of an injunction, impossible under the circumstances (since the right of representing *Faust* at my own theatre had been duly purchased by me from the Paris publishers), to prevent me from performing the most successful opera I had yet secured.

In 1865 Mr. Gye did not renew his annual attack until my season was almost at an end. But on the last night, or nearly so, just when I had been promising good things for the ensuing season, he attempted to spring a mine upon me in my own house. I was sitting calmly in my box watching a particularly good performance of *Faust*, with Titiens, Trebelli, Gardoni, Junca, and Santley in the principal parts, when the old Duke of Leinster came in and said —

“Look here, Mapleson; what is the meaning of this?”

He handed me a printed announcement which I found had been placed in every seat in my theatre, and which I here reproduce with all possible precision, not excepting the typographical peculiarities by which the name of the “Right Hon. the Earl of Dudley” is made to appear in large capitals, and that of Mr. Gye in larger capitals still. Here is the

astonishing document which if, on reflection, it filled me with mirth, did also, I freely admit, cause me for a few moments considerable surprise :—

Mr. GYE has the honour to announce that he has transferred the proprietorship of **THE ROYAL ITALIAN OPERA, COVENT GARDEN**, to a Public Company.

Mr. GYE will occupy the position of General Manager.

The Company has now made arrangements for purchasing of **THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF DUDLEY** his Lordship's interest in **HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE, HAYMARKET**.

The Prospectus of the Company will be issued in a few days.

**ROYAL ITALIAN OPERA,
COVENT GARDEN,
JULY 29TH, 1865.**

On inquiry I found that an emissary from Covent Garden had bribed one of my box keepers, who, for the small sum of one sovereign, had betrayed his trust, and deluged my theatre with daring and mendacious announcements from the opposition house.

In 1866 Mr. Gye tried to carry out the arrangement with which he had audaciously threatened me in my own theatre just as the season of 1865 was terminating. I happened to hold a twenty-one years' lease of Her Majesty's Theatre; and to purchase Lord Dudley's interest in the establishment was a very different thing from purchasing mine. But what at once put a stop to Mr. Gye's action in the matter was an injunction obtained by Colonel Brownlow Knox to restrain Mr. Gye from dealing with the Royal Italian Opera as his property until the seemingly interminable case of *Knox v. Gye* had been decided.

In 1867 Mr. Gye may have been nurturing I know not what deadly scheme against my theatre. But this year a fatal accident came to his aid, and he was spared the trouble of executing any hostile design. It was in 1867 that Her Majesty's Theatre was destroyed by fire.

In 1868 came the proposition for partnership. Mr. Gye wished to grapple with me at closer quarters.

In 1869 Mr. Gye was intriguing with Lord Dudley to get Her Majesty's Theatre into his hands.

In 1870 Mr. Gye made his droll proposal to the effect that I should go equal shares with him in paying the rent of Her Majesty's Theatre, I binding myself not to open it.

In 1872 Mr. Gye engaged Mdlle. Albani, already under contract to me, and helped himself to my version of *Lohengrin*.

In 1873 he offered an engagement to one of my two leading stars, Mdlle. Nilsson; and I had myself to write explaining to him very clearly that she was engaged to me.

For two whole years Mr. Gye remained quiet as towards me. But in 1876, when I was on the point of completing the capital necessary for carrying out my grand National Opera project on the Thames Embankment, he wrote a letter which somehow found its way into the *Times*, denouncing the whole affair, and proving by an extraordinary manipulation of figures that my rent would be something like £40,000 a year.

In 1877 Mr. Gye, knowing that I had engaged Gayarré, and well assured that I should not have done so had not Gayarré been a good artist, offered him double what I was to pay him. Gayarré, with all the innocence of a tenor, explained to me that the temptation presented to him was irresistible. I brought an action against him all the same, and obtained in the Italian Courts a judgment for £8,000, which I have not yet been able to enforce by reason of his having no property in Italy.

CHAPTER XL.

ADELINA'S SUCCESSOR — A PRIMA DONNA'S MARRIAGE
NEGOTIATIONS—POUNDS *v.* GUINEAS—NILSSON AND THE
SHAH—PRODUCTION OF "LOHENGRIN"—SALVINI'S
PERFORMANCES AND PROFITS—MARGUERITE CHAPUY—
IRONY OF AN EARL.

HAVING relied upon Mdme. Nilsson's services for my Drury Lane season of 1871, I felt in a position of great difficulty. I thereupon set about inquiring for a capable prima donna to supply her place. About two days afterwards I received a letter from America informing me of a most extraordinary singer, the writer further setting forth that his father had, some twenty years previously, recommended me Adelina Patti, and that he could equally endorse all that was now said of this coming star. Without one moment's hesitation I accepted, feeling sure the "tip" must be a good one, and in due course the lady arrived. She was of short stature and remarkably stout, which I considered at once a drawback; but so unbounded was my confidence in the recommendation that I persuaded myself these

defects would be of no consequence whatever in the general result.

At the conclusion of the first rehearsal Sir Michael Costa came down in a most mysterious way, asking me if I was sure as to the prima donna's talents. I told him he need be under no apprehension whatever on the subject.

At length the general rehearsal arrived, and a message came from Sir Michael, begging me to ask the little lady to sing out, as up to the present time nobody had heard her voice at any of the rehearsals. I came on to the stage, but as our new *Diva* was conducting herself with great importance, and moreover seemed to be busy with the preparation of her music, I told Sir Michael that he need labour under no misapprehension, as she was guaranteed to take the town by storm.

Evening came, and a more dismal *fiasco* I do not recollect. Such unbounded faith had I placed in my American friend's recommendation, together with the laudatory notices which had appeared in the numerous journals he had sent, that I confess I was on this occasion taken in.

This is the only instance in the course of my lengthened career in which an artist introduced by me has not been forthwith accepted by the public, and I admit that the result in this particular case was entirely due to my own neglect in not hearing her beforehand.

It was rather hard lines on the "Faust" of the

evening, M. Capoul, who made his first appearance in England on this occasion ; likewise on Moriami, the favourite baritone, and Rives, a young French artist, who sustained the rôle of "Mephistopheles" with great credit.

The following evening I produced *Robert le Diable*, in which Signor Nicolini made his first appearance in England, enacting the rôle of "Roberto" to perfection. Belval, the first bass of the Paris opera, was the "Bertramo," Mdme. Ilma de Murska the "Isabella," and Titiens the "Alice." In the excellence of this performance my "Margherita" of the previous evening was soon forgotten, and I booked her an early passage back to America, where, strange to say, she still retained a first-class position, and did so for many years afterwards.

As matters were still unsettled between Lord Dudley and his would-be tenant, Gye, I again secured Drury Lane for my season of 1872. Prior to concluding Mdle. Nilsson's engagement, as she was still unmarried, her Paris agent, who advised her, called upon me, stating that in the event of my requiring her services I had better notify to him that the marriage must be postponed until the close of my proposed opera season. To this I consented, and I attended at a meeting where I met the future husband and the agent, when it was explained to the former that Mdle. Nilsson was ready and willing to perform her agreement to marry him, but that in that case she would lose her London

engagement, and would be very angry ; whereupon it was agreed the marriage should be further postponed. Papers were drawn up, and the proper stamps affixed, whereby Mdle. Nilsson was to return to me for my season of 1872.

On the 28th May she made her reappearance, after an absence of two years, renewing her success as “*La Traviata*,” followed by *Faust*, *Trovatore*, etc.

During this season I produced Cherubini’s *Water-carrier*, in which Titiens sang ; also *Lucia di Lammermoor*, with Nilsson for the first time as the heroine, which drew enormous houses ; followed by the *Marriage of Figaro*, in which Titiens and Kellogg appeared, Nilsson acting the “saucy page” to perfection. A most successful season was the result, and in lieu of appearing only four times Mdle. Nilsson sang never less than twice a week until the close. The terms I was paying her caused a deal of trouble between Patti and Gye ; for *la Diva* had heard of Nilsson’s enormous salary. Gye had ultimately to give in ; but £200 a night would not satisfy Mdme. Patti, although previously she had been contented with £80 ; and it was ultimately arranged that she should have more than Nilsson. Gye managed this by paying her 200 guineas nightly, whilst Nilsson had only 200 pounds.

Some two or three weeks after the opening of the season I heard of a desirable tenor in Italy, named Campanini, and at once endeavoured to add him to

my already strong Company. My agent reached Rome before Mr. Gye, and secured the prize. I thereupon set to work to create all the excitement I possibly could, knowing that unless this were done no curiosity would be felt by the public as to his first appearance. I said so much of him that general expectation was fully aroused. In the meantime I was anxiously awaiting his arrival. One evening, about nine o'clock, the hall-keeper brought me word that there was someone "from Campini, or some such name." I immediately brightened up, and said, "Send the messenger in," who accordingly entered. He had a coloured flannel shirt on, no shirt collar, a beard of two or three days' growth, and a little pot-hat. He, in fact, looked rather a rough customer. In reply to my interrogation he informed me that Campanini had arrived, and was in London. I replied, "Are you sure?" Thereupon he burst out laughing, and said that he was Campanini. I felt as if I should go through the floor.

However, the night arrived for his first performance, which took place on May 4th, when he appeared as "Gennaro" in *Lucrezia Borgia*, with Titians and Trebelli, and with Agnesi as the "Duke." The house was crowded from floor to ceiling, and I must say the tenor fulfilled every anticipation, and, in fact, surpassed my expectations. The salary I paid him was not a large one, and I had engaged him for five years. After ten or twelve days an agent arrived from America who

had heard of his success, and offered him £1,000 a month, which was five times what I was to pay him. I need hardly say that this offer, coupled with his great success, completely turned his head, and he became partially unmanageable. Marie Roze, I may add, made her first appearance in England during this season.

At its close Mdle. Christine Nilsson was married to M. Rouzaud at Westminster Abbey, surrounded by a numerous circle of friends, the ceremony being performed by Dean Stanley. The wedding party were afterwards entertained by the Cavendish Bentincks at their splendid mansion in Grafton Street, where a sumptuous *déjeuner* was served.

After two or three weeks' holiday at Aix-les-Bains, I started my autumn tour, as usual, at Dublin, for which I engaged Titiens, Marimon, de Murska, Trebelli, Scalchi, Agnesi, Campanini, Fancelli, Foli, etc. This season of fourteen weeks, which carried us up to Christmas, was an unbroken series of triumphs, the receipts being simply enormous; whilst on the spare days when certain of my singers were not required I filled in sometimes as much as £1,000 a week from concerts, without the regular service of the tour being disturbed. We visited Dublin, Cork, Belfast, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Bristol, and Brighton. This was followed by the usual spring concert tour of 1873, when we did, as usual, our 60 or 70

towns, concluding with a spring opera tour in the north.

For my season of 1873, which again took place at Drury Lane—Her Majesty's Theatre, although built, being still without furniture or scenery—I re-engaged Mdme. Nilsson, paying her £200 per night, in addition to my regular company, which, of course, included Titiens; also Ilma de Murska, Marie Roze, Trebelli, etc., etc. I, moreover, introduced Mdlle. Valleria, Mdlle. Macvitz, an excellent contralto; Aramburo, a tenor possessing a marvellous voice, who has since achieved European fame; Signor Del Puente, the eminent baritone, and many others.

I likewise engaged Mdme. Ristori, who appeared in several of her favourite characters alternately with the operatic performances. Her success was striking, notably in the parts of "Medea," "Mary Stuart," "Elizabeth," and "Marie Antoinette." In the latter impersonation she moved the audience to tears nightly by her pathetic acting.

During this season, early in the month of July, it was intimated to me that His Majesty the Shah of Persia would honour the theatre with his presence. I thereupon set about organizing a performance that would give satisfaction both to my principal artists and to the Lord Chamberlain, who had charge of the arrangements, and decided that the performance should consist of the third act of *La Favorita*, Mdlle. Titiens

enacting the rôle of "Leonora," the first act of *La Traviata*, and, after a short ballet, the first act of *Mignon*, Mdme. Nilsson taking the title rôle in the two latter operas. Mdlle. Titiens, who rarely created difficulties, took rather an exception to commencing the evening, and said that it would be better to divide the two appearances of Nilsson by placing the act of *La Favorita* between them; Mdme. Nilsson, on the other hand, objected to this arrangement. Two days before the performance Mdme. Nilsson suddenly expressed her willingness to commence the evening with the act of *La Traviata*, she having ascertained from the Lord Chamberlain, or some other high personage (as I afterwards discovered), that His Majesty the Shah could only be present from half-past eight until half-past nine, being due at the grand ball given by the Goldsmiths in the City at about ten o'clock.

Mdme. Nilsson had ordered, at considerable expense, one of the most sumptuous dresses I have ever seen, from Worth, in Paris, in order to portray "Violetta" in the most appropriate style. On the evening of the performance His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales arrived punctually at half-past eight to assist in receiving the Shah, who did not put in an appearance; and it was ten minutes to nine when Sir Michael Costa led off the opera. I shall never forget the look the fair Swede cast upon the empty royal box, and it was not until half-past

nine, when the act of *La Favorita* had commenced, that His Majesty arrived. He was particularly pleased with the ballet I had introduced in the *Favorita*. The Prince of Wales, with his usual consideration and foresight, suggested to me that it might smooth over the difficulty in which he saw clearly I should be placed on the morrow in connection with Mdme. Nilsson, if she were presented to the Shah prior to his departure.

I thereupon crossed the stage and went to Mdme. Nilsson's room, informing her of this. She at once objected, having already removed her magnificent *Traviata* toilette and attired herself for the character of "Mignon," which consists of a torn old dress almost in rags, with hair hanging dishevelled down the back, and naked feet. After explaining that it was a command with which she must comply, I persuaded her to put a bold face on the matter and follow me. I accompanied her to the ante-room of the royal box, and before I could notify her arrival to His Royal Highness, to the astonishment of all she had walked straight to the farther end of the room, where His Majesty was then busily employed eating peaches out of the palms of his hands.

The look of astonishment on every Eastern face was worthy of the now well-known picture on the Nabob pickles. Without a moment's delay Mdme. Nilsson made straight for His Majesty, saying —

"Vous êtes un très mauvais Shah," gesticulating

with her right hand. "Tout à l'heure j'étais très riche, avec des costumes superbes, exprès pour votre Majesté ; à présent je me trouve très pauvre et sans souliers," at the same time raising her right foot within half an inch of His Majesty's nose ; who, with his spectacles, was looking to see what she was pointing to. He was so struck with the originality of the fair prima donna that he at once notified his attendants that he would not go to the Goldsmiths' Ball for the present, but would remain to see this extraordinary woman.

His Majesty did not consequently reach the Goldsmiths' Hall until past midnight. The Lord Mayor, the Prime Warden, the authorities, and guards of honour had all been waiting since half-past nine.

On the close of my London season of 1873 I had considerable difficulty in obtaining a renewal of Mdme. Nilsson's contract for the ensuing year ; in fact, she declined altogether to discuss the matter with me. I was fully aware that she was very jealous of the firm position which Mdle. Titiens enjoyed in the good opinion of the British public. This had manifested itself on the occasion of Titiens's benefit, when *Nozze di Figaro* had been selected for the closing night of the season. Much correspondence took place, in the course of which it was asserted that M. Rouzand would not allow his wife to put on "Cherubino's" trunks, he having decided that her legs should never again be seen by

the public. I, therefore, had to substitute Mdme. Trebelli, who, as an experienced contralto, could make no objection on such points.

Mdme. Nilsson's agent, Mr. Jarrett, succeeded at last in inducing her to sign a contract, and he then explained to me that Mr. Gye had been repeatedly making offers to her during the previous week, which, in spite of his notorious friendship for Mr. Gye, he had the greatest difficulty in making her refuse.

Ultimately an engagement had been prepared, and Jarrett asked me to sign it at the station just as Mdme. Nilsson was about to start for Paris. Before doing so I requested permission at all events to glance it over, when Mdme. Nilsson replied —

"The train is going. Either sign or leave it alone. I can make no possible alteration."

I mechanically appended my signature; the train started.

On perusing the engagement I discovered that she had reserved for herself the exclusive right of playing "Norma," "Lucrezia," "Fidelio," "Donna Anna," "Semiramide," and "Valentine" in *Les Huguenots*. But having omitted the words "during the season," and inasmuch as her engagement for 1874 did not commence until the 29th day of May, I had a clear period of eleven weeks during which another prima donna could play the parts Mdme. Nilsson claimed without overstepping her stringent condition.

I, moreover, felt placed in great difficulty with regard to Mdlle. Titiens, who was then at the Worcester Festival, and to whom it was, of course, necessary to mention the matter. I decided to go to Worcester at once and unbosom myself.

The great prima donna, on hearing what I had to tell her, smiled and said —

“By all means let her play the parts she wants; and, if the public prefers her rendering of them to mine, by all means let her keep them. But during the first eleven weeks they are open to other singers, and I will repeat them one by one so that the public may have a fair opportunity of judging between us.”

The great artist was, therefore, on her mettle during the early performances of 1874, prior to Nilsson's arrival.

The season opened with *Semiramide*, followed immediately by *Fidelio*, *Norma*, *Huguenots*, *Lucrezia*, etc., which were played one after the other until the arrival of Nilsson, who sang first in *Faust*, and immediately afterwards in Balfe's *Talismano*, after which I called on her to appear as “*Lucrezia*.”

The next morning I had a visit from her agent requesting me not to press the matter, as she was not quite prepared. I thereupon said “*Semiramide*” would do as well; to this he offered some objection; but at length, on my urging “*Fidelio*,” he explained to me that if I insisted upon her playing any of those characters which she had expressly

stipulated for I should mortally offend her. I could not even induce her to appear as "Donna Anna." Not one of those parts which she had reserved for her exclusive use was she able to undertake. We, therefore, had to fall back on *Faust*, alternated with *La Traviata*.

Finally a compromise was made whereby Mdme. Nilsson undertook the rôle of "Donna Elvira" in *Don Giovanni*, Mdle. Titiens retaining her great impersonation of "Donna Anna," in which she was acknowledged throughout the world of music to be unrivalled. This happy combination having been brought about, the season concluded with my benefit, when *Don Giovanni* was given to some £1,200 receipts.

During the autumn of 1873 I made my usual operatic tour, commencing in Dublin about the middle of September, where we remained three weeks, afterwards visiting Belfast, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, Bath, and Brighton, where we concluded on the 20th December.

Early in January, 1874, I again gave my usual forty-eight concerts in the various cities, opening the Edinburgh opera season about the middle of February. We afterwards visited other places, which brought us on to the London season, when I again occupied Drury Lane Theatre.

During this year I produced Auber's *Crown Diamonds*, and afterwards Balfe's *Talismano*, in

which Mdle. Nilsson undertook the principal rôle, Marie Roze appearing as the "Queen." Balfe's opera was very successful, and this, coupled with the alternate appearances of Titiens and Nilsson in other characters, followed by the revival of the *Magic Flute*, in which the whole Company took part, brought the season to a successful conclusion.

In the autumn of 1874 I opened, as usual, at Dublin, with a very powerful company, and continued out in the provinces until the latter part of December. I then went on the Continent in search of talent for the ensuing year, and returned in time to be present at my first concert, which took place in Liverpool early in January, 1875. We afterwards went through Ireland and the English provinces, commencing in the beginning of March the regular Italian Opera season in the northern capital, followed by Glasgow, Liverpool, &c.

Ilma de Murska was punctual with a punctuality which put one out quite as much as utter inability to keep an appointment would have done. She was sure to turn up on the very evening, and at the very hour when she was wanted for a representation. But she had a horror of rehearsals, and never thought it worth while, when she was travelling from some distant place on the Continent, to announce that she had started, or to give any idea as to when she might really be expected. Her geographical knowledge, too, was often at fault, and some of the routes—"short cuts" she called

them—by which she reached London from Vienna, were of the most extraordinary kind. She had taken a dislike to the Railway Station at Cologne, where she declared that a German officer had once spoken to her without being introduced; and on one occasion, partly to avoid the station of which she preserved so painful a recollection, partly in order to get to London by a new and expeditious route, she travelled from Vienna to St. Petersburg, and from St. Petersburg took boat to Hull, where she arrived just in time to join my Opera Company at the representations that I was then giving in Edinburgh. We had not heard of her for weeks, and she came into the dressing-room to find Madame Van Zandt already attired for the part *Mlle. de Murska* was to have played, that of “*Lucia*.” She argued, with some truth, that she was in time for the performance, and declared, moreover, that in entrusting the part of “*Lucia*” to another singer she could see a desire on my part to get rid of her.

The prima donna has generally a parrot, a pet dog, or an ape, which she loves to distraction, and carries with her wherever she goes. *Ilma de Murska*, however, travelled with an entire menagerie. Her immense Newfoundland, Pluto, dined with her every day. A cover was laid for him as for her, and he had learned to eat a fowl from a plate without dropping any of the meat or bones on the floor or even on the table cloth.

Pluto was a good-natured dog, or he would have made short work of the monkey, the two parrots, and the Angora cat, who were his constant associates. The intelligent animal hated travelling in the dog-truck, and he would resort to any sort of device in order to join his mistress in her first-class carriage, where he would, in spite of his immense bulk, squeeze himself beneath the seat. Once I remember he sprang through the closed window, cutting himself severely about the nose in his daring leap.

The other animals were simple nuisances. But I must do the monkey the justice to say that he did his best to kill the cat, and a bare place on Minette's back showed how badly she had once been clawed by her mischievous tormentor.

The most expensive of Mdlle. de Murska's pets were probably the parrots. They flew about the room, perching everywhere and pecking at everything. Once at the Queen's Hotel, Birmingham, they tore with their beaks the kid off a valuable set of chairs, for which the hotel-keeper charged £30. The hotel bill of this reckless prima donna was always of the most alarming kind. She had the most extraordinary whims, and when Signor Sinico, Mdme. Sinico's first husband, in order to show the effect of parsley upon parrots, gave to one of Mdme. de Murska's birds enough parsley to kill it, nothing would satisfy the disconsolate lady but to have a post-mortem examination of the bird's remains.

This was at Glasgow, and the post-mortem was made by two very grave, and I have no doubt very learned, Scotch practitioners. Finding in the parrot's maw some green matter for which they could not satisfactorily account, they came, after long deliberation, to the conclusion that the bird had been eating the green wall-paper of the sitting room, and that the arsenic contained in the colouring matter had caused its death. The cost of this opinion was three guineas, which Mdle. de Murska paid without a murmur.

I again returned to Drury Lane for my London season of 1875. After lengthy negotiations with a great Italian tragedian, engagements were signed, and he duly arrived in London, and appeared the second night of my season in the character of "Otello." I need scarcely say that this tragedian was Salvini, who at once struck the public by his magnificent delineation of Shakespeare's hero. I was now compelled to open my theatre seven times every week (four for opera, three for tragedy), from the early part of March until the latter end of July. I produced various works, notably Wagner's *Lohengrin*, in which Mdle. Titiens, who very kindly undertook the rôle of "Ortruda," really excelled herself. This, with Mdle. Christine Nilsson as "Elsa," Campanini as the "Knight of the Swan," and Galassi as "Telramund," with an increased orchestra under Sir Michael Costa's able direction, caused me to increase the prices of admission; and even then it was impos-

sible to get a seat during the remainder of the season.

About this time the usual annual proposals were made for Mdlle. Titiens's services at a series of concerts to be given in the United States of America, by which she was to receive £160 a night guaranteed, and half the receipts beyond a certain amount. After some time I consented to this arrangement.

At the close of Salvini's engagement I handed him £8,000 for his half-share of the profits, retaining a like amount for myself.

In July, 1875, one of the most charming vocalists that it has been my pleasure to know, a lady who as regards voice, talent, grace, and style was alike perfect, and who was as estimable by her womanly qualities as by her purely artistic ones, made her first appearance at my temporary Operatic home, Drury Lane, as "Rosina," in *Il Barbiere*. This was Mdlle. Marguerite Chapuy, and no sooner had the news of her success been proclaimed than Adelina Patti came, not once, but twice running to hear her.

At the first performance Mdlle. Chapuy made such an impression on the public that in the scene of the music lesson she was encored no less than four times; particularly successful among the various pieces she introduced being the "Aragonese" from Auber's *Domino Noir*, and the waltz from Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet*. Sir Michael Costa

hated encores, but on this occasion he departed willingly from his usual rule.

Marguerite Chapuy charmed everyone she came near; among others a young French sergeant, a gentleman, that is to say, who had enlisted in the French army, and was now a non-commissioned officer. Her parents, however, did not look upon the young man as a fit husband for such a prima donna as their daughter, and it was true that no vocalist on the stage seemed to have a brighter future before her. Mdlle. Chapuy remained meanwhile at Drury Lane, and the success of her first season was fully renewed when in the second she appeared as "Violetta" in *La Traviata*. A more refined impersonation of a character which requires very delicate treatment, had never been seen.

It struck me after a time that my new "Violetta" was not wasting away in the fourth act of *La Traviata* alone. She seemed to be really perishing of some malady hard to understand; and when the most eminent physicians in London were called in they all regarded the case as a difficult one to deal with since there was nothing definite the matter with the patient. Gradually, however, she was fading away.

There could be no thought of her appearing now on the stage; and at her own desire, as well as that of her father and mother, who were naturally most anxious about her, she was removed to France. No signs of improvement, however, manifested them-

selves. She got weaker and weaker, and when she was seemingly on the point of death her hard-hearted parents consented to her marriage with the young sergeant. My consent had also to be given, and I naturally did not withhold it.

Mdlle. Chapuy had signed an engagement with me for several years. But everyone said that the unhappy vocalist was doomed; and such was beyond doubt the belief of her parents, or they never would have consented to her throwing herself away on an honourable young man who was serving his country for something less than a franc a day, when she might so easily have captured an aged banker or a ruined Count.

Shortly afterwards I met her in Paris looking remarkably well. She told me that her husband had received his commission soon after their marriage, and that he now held some local command at Angoulême. As I had not released her from her engagement, I suggested to her, and even entreated, that she should fulfil it. Her husband, however, would not hear of such a thing. He preferred that they should live quietly on the £120 a year which he was now receiving from the Government. I offered as much as £200 a night, but without effect.

All I could get was a promise from Mdlle. Chapuy that in the event of her returning to the stage she would give me her services in accordance with the terms of the contract she had previously signed. Later on she told me that she still sang once a year

for charitable purposes; and I still hope for her return to the lyric stage.

I here append the letter she addressed to me just after her marriage:—

“Angoulême, 8 Decembre, 1876.

“**CHER MONSIEUR MAPLESON,**

“Je vous remercie de votre bonne lettre et je m’empresse d’y répondre pour vous assurer que je m’engage aussi formellement que vous pouvez le désirer à ce que l’engagement que nous avons ensemble soit remis en vigueur si jamais je reprends la carrière théâtrale: je vous promets aussi que vous pourriez compter sur moi pour la grande saison de Londres qui suivrait ma rentrée sur la scène. Vous avez été trop bon et trop aimable pour moi, pour que j’hésite un instant à vous faire cette promesse. Du reste, il me serait bien agréable, si je reprenais le théâtre, de reparâître sur la scène de Londres, car je n’ai pas oublié combien le public Anglais a été bienveillant pour moi.

“En attendant votre réponse veuillez agréer cher Monsieur Mapleson l’assurance de mes sentiments dévoués.

“**MARGUERITE ANDRÉ-CHAPUY,**

“Rue St. Gelais, 34.

“Mon mari, ma grande-mère, et ma mère sont bien sensibles à votre aimable souvenir et vous font tous leurs compliments.”

There are two ways of judging a singer—by the

vocalist's artistic merits, and by the effect of his or her singing on the receipts. In the first place I judge for myself by the former process. But when an appearance has once been made I fall back, as every manager is bound to do, on the commercial method of judgment, and calculate whether the amount of money drawn by the singer is enough to justify the outlay I am making for that singer's services. The latter was the favourite system of the illustrious Barbaja, who, when he was asked his private opinion as to this or that member of his Company, would say —

“I have not yet consulted my books. I must see what the receipts were, and I will answer your question to-morrow.”

Referring to my books, I find with great satisfaction that the charming artist, whom I admired quite as much before she had sung a note at my theatre as I did afterwards, when she had fairly captivated the public, drew at her first performance £488, and at her second £538; this in addition to an average nightly subscription of £600.

Thus Mdlle. Chapuy made her mark from the first.

Other vocalists, even of the highest merit, have been less fortunate. Thus Mdlle. Marimon, when she appeared at my theatre in 1871, drew at her first performance (that of “Amina,” in *La Sonnambula*) £73, at her second £280, at her third £358, at her fourth £428. To these sums, as in the case of

Mdlle. Chapuy, the nightly proportion of the subscription has, of course, to be added.

As with singers, so with operas. I choose a work which, according to my judgment, ought to succeed, and cast it as well as I possibly can. It will not in any case please the public the first night; and I have afterwards to decide whether I shall make sacrifices, as with *Faust*, and run it at a loss in the hope of an ultimate success, or whether I shall cut the matter short by dropping it, even after a vast outlay in scenery, dresses, and properties, and after much time and energy expended at rehearsals.

When I brought out Cherubini's admirable *Deux Journées* (otherwise *The Water Carrier*) I was complimented by the very best judges on the beauty of the work, and also (how little they knew!) on its success. I received congratulations from Jenny Lind, from Benedict, from Hallé, from Millais, from the Baroness Burdett-Coutts. But there was not more than £97 that night in the treasury. Thereupon I made my calculation. It would have cost me £1,200 to make the work go, and I could not at that moment afford it. I was obliged, then, to drop it, and that after five weeks' rehearsals!

Some time afterwards I produced Rossini's *Otello* with a magnificent cast. Tamberlik was the "Otello," Faure the "Iago," Nilsson the "Desdemona." The other parts were played by Foli, Carrion (an excellent tenor from Spain), and others. All my friends were delighted to find that I had

made another great success. I listened to their flattering words. But the treasury contained only £167 3s., for which reason *Otello* was not repeated.

In rebuilding Her Majesty's Theatre Lord Dudley did not think it worth while to consult me or any other operatic manager. He had the opportunity of erecting the only isolated theatre in London, and the most magnificent Opera-house in the world, for the shops in the Opera Colonnade and the adjoining hotel in Charles Street might at that time have been purchased for comparatively small sums. The Earl, however, as he himself told me, cared only to comply with the terms of his lease, which bound him to replace the theatre which had been destroyed by another of no matter what description, provided only that it had four long scenes and four short ones.

Messrs. Lee and Paine, the architects entrusted with the duty of covering the vacant site, acted after their own lights, and they succeeded in replacing two good theatres by a single bad one. The old Opera-house, despite its narrow stage, had a magnificent auditorium, and the Bijou theatre, enclosed within its walls, possessed a value of its own. It was let to Charles Mathews, when theatrical property possessed less value than now, for £100 a week; and Jenny Lind sang in it to houses of £1,400.

When the new theatre had been quite finished Lord Dudley was shown over it by the delighted architects. His lordship was a tall man, and his hat suffered, I remember, by coming into collision

with the ceiling of one of the corridors. Turning to the senior partner, who was dying to catch from his aristocratic patron some word of satisfaction, if not of downright praise, the Earl thus addressed him —

“If narrow corridors and low ceilings constitute a fine theatre you have erected one which is indeed magnificent.”

The architect, lost in confusion at being addressed in terms which he thought from his lordship's finely ironical demeanour must be in the highest degree complimentary, did nothing but bow his acknowledgments, and it was not until a little later that some good-natured friends took the trouble to explain to him what the Earl had really said.

CHAPTER XII.

THE NATIONAL OPERA-HOUSE—FOUNDATION DIFFICULTIES—
PRIMEVAL REMAINS—TITIENS LAYS THE FIRST BRICK—
THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH THE FIRST STONE—THE
OPERA AND PARLIAMENT—OUR RECREATION ROOMS.

DURING all this time I was busily engaged selecting plans for the construction of my new National Opera-house, which I then considered a most desirable investment, inasmuch as Her Majesty's Theatre, which had been hastily built, was ill-adapted for the requirements of Italian Opera, whilst Covent Garden was heavily encumbered with liabilities. Indeed, more than one negotiation had already taken place with the Duke of Bedford with a view to its purchase and demolition. I, therefore, saw that sooner or later London would be without a suitable Opera-house. In order to expedite the works it was considered desirable that the foundations should be proceeded with pending the final settlement of the drawings, taking out the quantities, etc., and deciding who the contractors should be.

Mr. Webster, who constructed the best part of the Thames Embankment, was deemed to be the fitting man, and I therefore had an interview with

him on the subject. In this interview he told me he would execute the whole of the foundations up to the datum level for the sum of £5,000.

On consulting with my architect he advised that it would be more economical that this preliminary work should be paid for by measurement, which Mr. Webster ultimately agreed to. No sooner had they dug to a certain depth than it was discovered that no foundation could be obtained. Afterwards screw piles were attempted and all other kinds of contrivances to obviate the expense with which we were threatened in the prosecution of the works. The digging proceeded to a depth of some 40 or 50 feet without discovering anything but running springs and quicksands, covered by a large overlying mass of rubbish, being the accumulation of several ages in the history of Westminster. Many relics of olden times came to light, including the skulls and bones of wild elks and other primitive animals that once roamed about the Thames Valley and were hunted by ancient Britons in the days of the Druids. Various swords, gold and inlaid, often richly-fashioned, told of the feuds of York and Lancaster; while many other objects, concealed for centuries, now came forth to throw a light on the faded scroll of the past.

As the builders had got considerably below the depth of the Thames and consequently that of the District Railway, the water began to pour in, which necessitated some fifteen or twenty steam-pumping machines being kept at work for several

months. At length the London Clay was reached, which necessitated various cuttings, some 16ft. wide, down which had to be placed some 40ft. of concrete.

At length the foundations were completed, and the sum I had to pay, according to measurement, was not £5,000, but £33,000. This was really one of the first blows to my enterprise.

Early in September the first brick of my new National Opera-house, prior to the commencement of the substructure, was laid. A number of friends were on the ground at one o'clock, and in a short time a great throng of spectators had assembled around the spot. Punctually at 1.30 Mdlle. Titiens arrived, under the escort of Lord Alfred Paget, Mr. Fowler, the Architect, and myself. The party passed along the wooden platform, and descended a handsomely-carpeted staircase, which led to the foundation of concrete upon which the "brick" was to rest. On reaching the bottom, Mdlle. Titiens, as she leaned on the arm of Mr. Fowler, was presented with an elaborately-engraved silver trowel by Mr. Webster, the Contractor. The fair singer was then conducted to the spot, where a thin, smooth layer of white mortar had been spread on the concrete. The foreman of the masons placed a brick in the midst of this, and Mdlle. Titiens then in a formal manner laid the first brick, using the plumb-line to ascertain that the work had been properly done. Second, third, and fourth bricks were afterwards

laid by Mr. Fowler, Lord Alfred Paget, and myself. Hearty cheers were then given for Mdlle. Titiens by the 600 workmen congregated around, who wished the Queen of Song success and happiness on her approaching Atlantic voyage.

Prior to her departure, Mdlle. Titiens gave four farewell concerts in Ireland; and it was with great difficulty after the last one, at Cork, that she escaped from the concert room at all, so numerous were the encores. The steamer having been signalled, she had to rush straight from the concert room, in her concert dress, with all her jewellery on, to catch the train leaving for Queenstown.

In the autumn of 1875 Mdlle. Titiens was replaced on the provincial tour by Madame Christine Nilsson; and the business again was highly successful. The tour continued until Christmas. I came up to London on the 16th December, to be present at the laying of the first stone of the new Opera-house by H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh.

The following was the programme of the ceremonial, which was duly carried out:—

CEREMONY OF LAYING THE FIRST STONE

OF THE

GRAND NATIONAL OPERA-HOUSE,

VICTORIA EMBANKMENT.

Holders of Cards of Invitation will not be admitted after 1.15.

“The bands of the Coldstream Guards and Honourable Artillery Company will be in attendance, and a Guard of Honour will line the entrance.

- “His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh and suite will arrive at the entrance on the Victoria Embankment at half-past one o’clock.
- “His Royal Highness will be received by Mr. W. H. Smith, M.P., Sir James Hogg, Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works, Mr. F. H. Fowler, the Architect, and Mr. J. H. Mapleson, the Director of the National Opera.
- “On arrival at the platform an address will be read to the Duke of Edinburgh in the name of the founders of the Grand National Opera-house.
- “His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh will then proceed to lay the first stone.
- “The trowel will be handed to His Royal Highness by Mr. Mapleson, the Director; the plumb-rule and level by Mr. F. H. Fowler, the Architect; and the mallet by Mr. W. Webster, the Builder.
- “On the completion of the ceremony His Royal Highness will make a brief reply to the address.
- “The Duke of Edinburgh will then be conducted to his carriage at the entrance by which His Royal Highness arrived, and will drive to the St. Stephen’s Club.
- “16th December, 1875.”

The following address was then read by Sir James McGarel Hogg :—

“YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS,—

“On behalf of the founders of the Grand National Opera-house, I have the honour to present to your Royal Highness the following address in

which the objects of the undertaking are set forth :—

“ The establishment of a National Opera-house in London has long been contemplated, the obstacle to which, however, was the impossibility of finding a suitable site, and it was not until that vast undertaking was carried out by the Metropolitan Board of Works, which has resulted in reclaiming from the Thames large tracts of land, and in throwing open the great thoroughfare of the Victoria Embankment, that a site sufficient to meet the requirements of a National Opera-house could be obtained ; and it is this building that your Royal Highness is graciously pleased to inaugurate to-day.

“ The National Opera-house is to be devoted firstly to the representation of Italian Opera, which will be confined as heretofore to the spring and summer months ; and, secondly, to the production of the works of English composers, represented by English performers, both vocal and instrumental.

“ It is intended, as far as possible, to connect the Grand National Opera-house with the Royal Academy of Music, the National Training School for Music, and other kindred institutions in the United Kingdom, by affording to duly qualified students a field for the exercise of their profession in all its branches.

“ The privilege, which it is the intention of the Director to grant to the most promising of these students, of being allowed to hear the works of the

greatest masters performed by the most celebrated artists, will, in itself, form an invaluable accessory to their general training.

“Instead of being compelled to seek abroad further instruction when their prescribed course at the various establishments is finished, they will thus be able to obtain this at home, and more quickly and efficiently profit by example.

“In Paris, when sufficiently advanced, the students can make a short step from the Conservatoire to the Grand Opera; so it is hoped that English students will use the legitimate means now offered and afforded for the first time in this country of perfecting their general training, whether as singers, instrumentalists, or composers, according to their just claims.

“In conclusion I beg leave to invite your Royal Highness to proceed with the ceremony of laying the first stone of the new Grand National Opera-house.

“Grand National Opera-house,

“Victoria Embankment,

“16th December, 1875.”

In designing this, I intended it to be the leading Opera-house of the world; every provision had been made. The building was entirely isolated; and a station had been built beneath the house in connection with the District Railway, so that the audience on leaving had merely to descend the stairs and enter the train. In the sub-basement dressing-rooms,

containing lockers, were provided for suburban visitors who might wish to attend the opera. A subterranean passage, moreover, led into the Houses of Parliament; and I had made arrangements by which silent members, after listening to beautiful music instead of dull debates, might return to the House on hearing the division-bell. The Parliamentary support thus secured would alone have given an ample source of revenue.

Having plenty of surplus land, I had arranged with the Lyric Club to lease one corner, whilst the Royal Academy of Music had agreed to take another. The buildings, moreover, were to include a new concert room, together with a large gallery for pictures not accepted by the Hanging Committee of the Royal Academy, to be called the "Rejected Gallery."

There were recreation rooms, too, for the principal artists, including billiard tables, etc., besides two very large Turkish baths, which, it was hoped, would be of service to the manager in cases of sore throat and sudden indisposition generally.

The throat doctors appointed to the establishment were Dr. Morell Mackenzie and Mr. Lennox Brown.

Sir John Humphreys had arranged for the purchase of a small steamer to act as tug to a large house-boat which would, from time to time, take the members of the Company down the river for rehearsals or recreation. The steamer was being built by the Thorneycrofts. The house-boat was of unusually

large dimensions, and contained a magnificent concert-room.

The nautical arrangements had been confided to Admiral Sir George Middleton, a member of my acting committee; or, in his absence, to Lord Alfred Paget.

When about £103,000 had been laid out on the building another £10,000 was wanted for the roofing; after which a sum of £50,000, as already arranged, could have been obtained on mortgage. For want of £10,000, however, the building had to remain roofless. For backing or laying against a horse, for starting a new sporting club or a new music-hall, the money could have been found in a few hours. But for such an enterprise as the National Opera-house it was impossible to obtain it; and, after a time, in the interest of my stockholders (for there was a ground rent to pay of £3,000), I consented to a sale.

The purchasers were Messrs. Quilter, Morris, and Tod-Heatly, to whom the building was made over, as it stood, for £29,000.

Later on it was resold for £500; and the new buyers had to pay no less than £3,000 in order to get the walls pulled down and broken up into building materials.

The site of what, with a little public spirit usefully applied, would have been the finest theatre in the world, is now to serve for a new police-station. With such solid foundations, the cells, if not comfortable, will at least be dry.

CHAPTER XIII.

FIRST VISIT TO AMERICA—MAKING MONEY OUT OF SHAKESPEARE—CHATTERTON'S SECRET AGENTS—BIDDING FOR HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE—ILLNESS OF TITIENS—GERSTER'S SUCCESS—PRODUCTION OF "CARMEN."

At the close of the year 1875 I was invited to spend the evening with some friends to see the old year out and the new year in. Amongst the visitors at the house I met an American gentleman who had seen many of my performances; and he assured me that if I would but go to America I should do a very fine business, but that prior to making arrangements I either ought to send over a trusted agent or go myself. So fully did he impress me by his conversation, that, although I had never contemplated such a thing, I went home late that night, or rather early the next morning, put a lot of traps together, and started the same afternoon for America, reaching Queenstown early on the morning of the 2nd January in time to catch the steamer.

I shall never forget my first voyage. I knew no

one on board : we were six or seven passengers in all. Few care to leave for a long voyage on New Year's Day. The vessel was not only small, although a Cunarder, but very unsteady. She was known amongst nautical men as the "Jumping Java." Our passage occupied 14 days, and we had to weather several very severe gales. One day we only made 16 knots.

However, I arrived on the other side in due course, and was forcibly struck with the grand country I had entered. As I could remain there only nine or ten days I hastened to visit Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, Cincinnati, and other places, in addition to New York. I, however, "prospected" by carefully noting all I saw; and afterwards returned to England to join my touring concert party during the latter part of the month. It was then in the provinces. I felt myself fully master of what I intended the following year to undertake; namely, a tour of Her Majesty's Opera Company in America, which later on in these memoirs I shall have occasion to describe. I also organized another tour in the English provinces, with Salvini, who appeared afterwards in all the principal provincial towns with immense success.

In the middle of October, 1875, I had the honour of being invited by the Duke of Edinburgh to Eastwell Park. Thinking the invitation was only for the day, I took nothing with me but a small bag containing an evening suit and a single shirt. When I arrived at Ashford station I was met by two six-

foot men in scarlet liveries, who had arrived with a fourgon, drawn by two splendid horses, into which they proposed to put my luggage. I noticed their efforts to restrain a smile when I handed to them my little hand-bag. Another magnificent equipage had been sent for me personally.

I was received with the greatest possible kindness; and it will interest many of my readers to know that just before dinner the Duchess took me to a buffet on which was laid out caviare, smoked salmon, salt herring (cut into small pieces), dried mushrooms, pickled cucumbers, and the various appetizing delicacies which, with spirits or liqueurs, form the preliminary repast known to the Russians as *zakuska*.

I had the honour of taking the Duchess in to dinner, where we formed a party of four: the Duke, the Duchess, the equerry in attendance, and myself. After dinner we adjourned to the music-room, where I noticed piles upon piles of music-books. I soon saw that the Duchess was an excellent musician. The Duke, too, received evidence of this; for in difficult passages he was pulled up and corrected again and again. Smoking being permitted and even enjoined, I lighted a cigar and smoked in silence on the sofa, listening with interest to the musical performances, which were in the form of duets for violin and piano, or violin solos with pianoforte accompaniment.

The next morning we were up early, and I was

taken over the estate. The Duchess pointed out to me her own particular fish-pond, in which she sometimes angles with a view to the table.

Then I went out shooting with the Duke; a rather trying business, for I had neither shooting-clothes nor, far worse, shooting-boots. Of course it began to rain, and I was soon wet through to the skin, my ordinary walking boots being soaked in such a manner that when I got back to the house, by which time the leather had partially dried and contracted, I had considerable difficulty in getting them off. The Duke was kind enough to lend me an overcoat.

At luncheon the Duchess asked for the key of the wine cellar, at which the Duke expressed surprise and curiosity. He was reproached for his inquisitiveness, but was not at the time enlightened as to the object for which the keys were wanted.

It appeared later on at dinner that the Duchess had been visiting a curate at some eight miles distance, who was ill, and had been recommended port wine. This, out of his meagre income, he would be unable, she said, to afford.

"With eighty pounds a year and five children, how," she asked, "can he drink port wine and eat new-laid eggs?"—which the doctor had also recommended. She had herself, therefore, driven over in the afternoon through the pouring rain to take them to him.

After lunch we had more shooting, the weather

being now a trifle better. We got home in good time for dinner, and in the evening played at billiards. The Duke is an infinitely better player than I am; but by a series of flukes I got ahead of him, and at last found myself within two points of the game, and with the balls so left that it was most difficult for me to avoid making a final cannon. I saw, however, from the expression of the Duchess's countenance, that she had set her heart upon her husband's defeating me; and I must now confess that if I succeeded in not making that cannon, so difficult to miss, I did so simply out of regard for Her Royal Highness's feelings. The Duchess during the game acted as marker.

It was the Duchess's birthday, and in the course of the evening a courier from Russia, who had been anxiously expected all day, arrived with innumerable presents of jewellery. To these offerings the Duchess paid little or no attention. All she cared for was a letter she was awaiting from her father, and, on receiving it, she was soon absorbed in the perusal of its contents.

A few months afterwards, when the Duchess was present at a performance of *Fidelio* given at Her Majesty's Opera, I had a new proof of Her Royal Highness's musical knowledge and of her delicate ear. She arrived before the beginning of the overture, and brought with her two huge orchestral scores. The Duchess sat on the floor of the box reading one of them, and turning of course very

rapidly over the leaves during the stretto of the "Leonora" overture. Suddenly she noticed an uncertain note from the second horn, and exclaimed, as if to set the musician right, "B flat!" After the act I asked Sir Michael Costa whether something did not go wrong with one of the horns. "Yes," he said, "but only a person with a very fine ear could have perceived it." I repeated to Her Royal Highness Costa's remark precisely as he had made it.

I opened my season again at Drury Lane early in 1876; but the lessee, Mr. Chatterton, who had been secretly treating with Salvini, did not think it right that in the great national theatre under his control I should be making so much money out of Shakespeare. The only contract I could now get from him had practically the effect of excluding Salvini, and this was really the beginning of Chatterton's ruin. Although I was to pay him the same amount of rental he insisted on retaining the Wednesday and Friday evenings and Saturday mornings for himself. I had therefore to rent another theatre wherein to place Salvini. Mr. Chatterton brought over another Italian tragedian, Signor Rossi, and put him to perform at Drury Lane in opposition to Salvini, whom I had to present at the Queen's Theatre in Long Acre. The consequence was that both of us dropped money, and Mr. Chatterton's losses during that time were, I believe, considerable.

To my Opera Company I had added M. Faure,

while retaining all the favourites of the previous year, including Titiens, Trebelli, Nilsson, &c.; Sir Michael Costa remaining as conductor.

At the close of 1876 I again visited the provinces, beginning my usual Italian Opera season at Dublin, with Mdle. Titiens, who had returned fresh from her American triumphs, supported by Marie Roze, Valleria, Ilma de Murska, Emma Abbot, Trebelli, etc., etc. The tour was indeed a most prosperous one, and it terminated towards the latter part of the December of that year.

Early in 1877, when I applied for the renewal of my lease of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, Mr. Chatterton showed much ill-will, which I attributed to his jealousy at my previous success with Salvini, and to my having declined to allow him to engage the Italian tragedian on his own account. He insisted that I should have the theatre but three days a week, and then only from ten in the morning till twelve at night. Not only was I precluded from using the theatre on the other days, but I was to finish my performance always by midnight and then hand him the key. As my rehearsals invariably have to take place on the "off days," when there is no opera, I should have been prevented by this arrangement from rehearsing at all. In fact, I found nothing but impossible clauses and conditions in the contract now offered.

At this time Mr. Chatterton was very anxious to find out whether or not the Earl of Dudley was

prepared to let me Her Majesty's Theatre ; and to ascertain this the good offices of some highly attractive young ladies performing in the pantomime were employed. Lord Dudley gave Mr. Chatterton to understand that though he was willing to sell the theatre, of which he saw no probability, he would not under any circumstances let it to Mapleson or any other man. Hence Chatterton continued to insist on his stringent conditions, although I had been his tenant for some eight or nine years, paying a very large amount of rent in addition to cleaning and carpeting his theatre every year, which was very much required after the pantomime.

On learning, in a direct manner, Lord Dudley's decision, I saw that it was hopeless to approach him in the character of a tenant. A purchaser I did not wish to be, as my new Opera-house, it was anticipated, would be ready for opening the following spring. All I, for the present, desired was a theatre where I could, unmolested, continue my season. I therefore made offers to Lord Dudley with a view to purchase, at the same time explaining to him my inability to pay the whole of the amount he then demanded, namely, £30,000. All I could do was to give him a deposit of £6,000 on account, and a further £6,000 in the following November, leaving £18,000 still due, with a clause, in case of any default being made in regard to the second instalment, by which the first was to be forfeited. To this his lordship assented. I had been ready to pay

him £7,000 as rent for a single year, but this he would have refused. By paying an instalment of £6,000 I saved £1,000, and equally obtained the use of the theatre. In due course the matter was completed.

During the month of February I entered into possession. There was not a single seat in the house, not a particle of paper on the walls ; neither a bit of carpet, nor a chair, nor a table anywhere. I therefore had to go and see Blundell Maple, the well-known upholsterer, who, out of regard for me and the advertisement I promised him, consented to give me a few things I required for the sum of £6,000. It involved the furnishing of the whole of the dressing-rooms, the auditorium, and corridors.

About four miles of carpeting were required, there being so many staircases and passages, all of which were luxuriously covered. New amber satin curtains, the traditional colour of the house, had to be manufactured specially. Stall chairs, appointments, fittings, and looking-glasses were also, of course, required. A room had to be built through solid masonry for the Prince of Wales, as a retiring-room. In fact, it was a very heavy affair ; and on my inviting a few friends and members of the Press to a dinner I gave at my club some two days before the opening, they confessed to having believed that the theatre could not be opened for two months. Maple, in order to show what he could do in a short space of time, had purposely left all

to the last day, when he sent in some 200 workmen and upholsterers, together with about 300 girls and carpet-sewers, so that the effect was really like the magic of Aladdin's Palace. The theatre, I need scarcely say, was finished in time, and gave great satisfaction.

The new theatre opened on 28th April, Titiens appearing as "Norma;" and a grand performance it was. Sir Michael Costa directed the orchestra, which went à merveille.

The day following it became evident that the great prima donna was suffering from a complaint which caused her the most serious inconvenience. The next evening Mdlle. Salla appeared with some success in *Il Trovatore*. On the succeeding Saturday, Mdme. Christine Nilsson made her *rentrée* in *La Traviata*; but immediately afterwards she too fell ill.

It seemed as if the new theatre was to bring nothing but bad luck, as it since has done to all connected with it. Mdlle. Titiens, however, had to make an effort, and she appeared again the next night as "Norma," and the Saturday afterwards in the *Trovatore*. Meantime Mdme. Nilsson recovered and reappeared on the following Thursday. Mdlle. Titiens was sufficiently well to appear at St. James's Hall, for Mr. Austin's benefit, at which she sang superbly, Mr. Austin, after the performance, assuring me that he had never before heard such magnificent singing. Mdlle. Titiens now informed me that she felt considerably better, and would appear

on the following Saturday, 19th May, as "Lucrezia Borgia," which she in fact did. But as the evening progressed she felt she could hardly get through the opera. Her voice was in its fullest perfection; but her bodily ailments caused her acute agony, and it was not until some time after the conclusion of the opera that she was able to leave the theatre.

The best advice was sought for, and it was decided by the lady herself that the operation, which ultimately caused her death, should be performed. At the end of three weeks, having recovered from the effects of the operation, as she thought, she expressed a wish to return to her duties at the theatre. But, alas! that wish was never to be fulfilled, and I had to go through the season with a loss, as it were, of my right hand.

She lived on in hopes of being able to recover, and she was even announced to appear at the usual period in the following September. But as time drew on it was clear that she was not long for this world. I last saw her on the 29th day of September. Early on the morning of the following Wednesday, October 3rd, she passed away.

I continued the London season of 1877 as best I could without the invaluable services of Mdle. Titiens, although from time to time we had formed hopes of her reappearing. I again brought Mdme. Nilsson to the front, but found it incumbent on me to discover a new planet, as Mdme. Nilsson,

finding she was alone in the field, became somewhat exacting. At last I found one; but, unfortunately, she was just on the point of being married, and nothing could induce her future husband to defer the ceremony. However, by dint of perseverance I succeeded in persuading him, for a consideration, to postpone the honeymoon; and in addition to this I was to pay a very large extra sum per night, while his wife's appearances were strictly limited to two each week.

About this time a great deal of intrigue was going on in order to prevent the success of the new star. I, however, discovered the authors of it, and worked accordingly. Thus I induced several members of the Press to attend after they had been positively assured that she was not worth listening to. Mdme. Gerster's success was really instantaneous, and before her three or four nights were over I had succeeded in again postponing the honeymoon—still for a consideration. Her success went on increasing until the very close of the season, by which time her receipts fairly balanced those of Mdme. Nilsson.

The charges for postponing the honeymoon were put down under a separate heading lest they should by any mistake be regarded as a portion of the prima donna's salary and be used as a precedent in connection with future engagements. At last, when several large payments had been made, the season came to a close, and the young couple, after several

months' marriage, were at liberty to begin their honeymoon.

After a journey through Italy and Germany in search of talent I returned to England, when I found the great prima donna's case was hopeless. Although it had been fully anticipated that she would make her reappearance in Dublin, she being in fact announced to sing there, it was, unhappily, decreed otherwise; and on the third night of our opening I had to substitute Mdle. Salla in *Il Trovatore*, in which Titiens had been originally announced. I received early that day (October 3, 1887) a telegram stating that she was no more. The Irish public on hearing the sad news at once left the theatre. It cast a gloom over the entire city, as it did throughout the musical world generally. A grand and gifted artist, an estimable woman, had disappeared never to be replaced.

After visiting several of the principal towns I returned to London and reopened Her Majesty's Theatre, reviving various operas of repute, and producing for the first time in this country *Ruy Blas*, which met with considerable success. My season terminated on the 22nd of December.

At Christmas time I reopened the theatre with an admirable ballet, composed expressly by Mdme. Katti Lanner, in which none but the children of my National Training School for Dancing took part. I afterwards performed a series of English operas, which were successful, Sir Julius

Benedict conducting. Concurrently with this I continued my regular spring concert tour, which did not terminate until the middle of March.

The London season of 1878 opened inauspiciously, the loss of the great prima donna causing a cloud to hang over the theatre. However, Mdme. Nilsson duly arrived, likewise Mdme. Gerster, and each sang so as to enhance her reputation.

Prior to the commencement of the season I had heard Bizet's *Carmen* in Paris, which I contemplated giving; and my decision was at once taken on hearing from Miss Minnie Hauk of the success she was then making in that opera at Brussels.

I therefore resolved upon engaging her to appear as "Carmen." In distributing the parts I well recollect the difficulties I had to encounter. On sending Campanini the rôle of "Don José" (in which he afterwards became so celebrated), he returned it to me stating he would do anything to oblige, but could not think of undertaking a part in an opera of that description where he had no romance and no love duet except with the *seconda donna*. Shortly afterwards Del Puente, the baritone, entered, informing me that the part of "Escamillo," which I had sent him, must have been intended for one of the chorus, and that he begged to decline it.

In vain did Sir Michael Costa order the rehearsals. There was always some trouble with the singers on account of the small parts I had given them. Mdle.

Valleria suggested that I should entrust the part of "Michaela" either to Bauermeister or to one of the chorus; as on no account would she undertake it.

This went on for some time, and I saw but little prospect of launching my projected opera. At length, by force of persuasion, coupled with threats, I induced the various singers, whether they accepted their parts or not, to attend a general rehearsal, when they all began to take a great fancy to the rôles I had given them; and in due course the opera was announced for the first representation, which took place on the 22nd June.

The receipts for the first two or three performances were most miserable. It was, in fact, a repetition of what I had experienced on the production of *Faust* in 1863, and I frankly confess that I was forced to resort to the same sort of expedients for securing an enthusiastic reception and thus getting the music into the heads of the British public, knowing that after a few nights the opera would be sure to please. In this I was not mistaken, and I closed my season with flying colours.

CHAPTER XIV.

FIRST AMERICAN CAMPAIGN—DIFFICULTIES OF EMBARKATION
—CONCERT ON BOARD—DANGEROUS ILLNESS OF GERSTER
—OPERA ON WHEELS—"THE DRESSING-ROOM ROW"—
A LEARNED THROAT DOCTOR—GERSTER SINGS BEFORE
HER JUDGE—THE PIANOFORTE WAR—OUR HURRIED
DEPARTURE.

AT the end of the season I went abroad to complete my Company for the first American tour, which was to begin about the middle of October. I started my Opera Company from London on the 31st August on its way to America, numbering some 140 persons, including Gerster, Minnie Hauk, Trebelli, Valleria, Campanini, Frapolli, Galassi, Del Puente, Foli, etc., with Arditi as conductor. This also comprised a magnificent chorus of some 60 selected voices, together with the whole of the *corps de ballet* and principal dancers; and I had decided to give some three or four weeks' performances in Ireland prior to sailing, in order to get things in working order, as well

as to recruit the exchequer for my costly enterprise. Although immense success attended the appearance of my new singers in the Irish capital, they were not sufficiently known to draw the great houses more famous artists would have done. Etelka Gerster almost drove the gods crazy with her magnificent singing; but as she was totally unknown, never having been in Ireland before, the receipts were not commensurate with her artistic success. Minnie Hauk, again, had never appeared in that country; nor had the opera of *Carmen* been heard, its very name seeming to be unknown. However, the artistic success was beyond measure, and the representations, moreover, served as a kind of general rehearsal for my coming performances in America. On reaching Cork I found the receipts were again below what they ought to have been, and I began to realize that in lieu of increasing my exchequer prior to starting for America I ran the chance of totally exhausting it.

I therefore telegraphed to my representative in New York for £2,000, in order that I might straighten up my position, and pay the balance of our passage money, the boat being then off Queens-town.

I was really anxious on this occasion, and it was not until late in the day that my cable arrived, notifying to me that the money was at my credit in the Bank of Cork. With some difficulty, it being after banking hours, I obtained admittance, when

lo! the money was all payable in Irish notes. These the singers pronounced to be useless for their purpose in America. They absolutely refused to embark, and it was not until towards evening that I was enabled with great difficulty to find gold at the various hotels and shops in exchange for my Irish notes.

At length we departed from Queenstown; though it was late in the evening before I succeeded in getting the last squad on board. Some of the Italian choristers had been assured by Irish humorists that the streets of New York were infested by crocodiles and wild Indians; and these they were most unwilling to encounter. We had a splendid passage across. The day before our arrival in New York it was suggested to give a grand concert in aid of the sufferers by the yellow fever then raging in New Orleans. I recollect on the occasion of the concert the collection made amongst the passengers amounted to some £3 or £4. One Western gentleman asked me particularly, in the presence of the purser, if the money would really be devoted to the relief of the sufferers. He, moreover, demanded that Captain Brooks, the officer in command, should guarantee that the money would reach them. The collection was made by those two charming young pianists, Mdles. Louise and Jeanne Douste, and by the equally charming young dancer, Mdle. Marie Muller; and at the conclusion of the concert, in which he had encored every one of the pieces,

the careful amateur from the West gave the sum of sixpence. Gerster, Minnie Hauk, Campanini, and the others were irate at the result of their united labours; and as they thought it might injure them on their arrival in New York, were the public to know of it, they privately subscribed £20 apiece all round to make the return look a little decent.

On our arrival in New York we were met by thousands of people, accompanied by military bands, etc., and although I had left, as it were, a winter behind me, we landed in the midst of a glorious Indian summer.

I set about making my preparations for the opening of my season, which was to commence on the 16th October, and to prepare the way for the *début* of Madame Etelka Gerster, who since our arrival had scarcely been her usual self. This I attributed to the sea voyage. Two days before the opening I gave a dinner, to which I invited several influential friends including members of the New York Press. As I was just about responding to the toast of the evening, wishing health to Madame Gerster and success to the Opera, the waiter beckoned me to the door, whispering that a gentleman wanted to speak to me for one moment. I went out, when Dr. Jacobi, the New York physician, called me into an adjoining room, where the eminent specialist, Dr. Lincoln, was waiting. They had just visited Madame Gerster, and regretted to inform me that a very bad attack of typhoid fever had developed

itself, and that consequently there would be no probability of her appearing the following Wednesday, while it was even doubtful in their minds if she would survive. She was in a very bad state.

This was indeed a great blow to me; but I returned to the room, continued my speech, and then went on with my dinner as if nothing had happened.

Making it a point never to think of business when I am not in my office, I decided to turn matters over the following morning, which was the day preceding the opening of the house. Being so far away, it would be impossible to replace Mdme. Gerster. I thereupon persuaded Miss Minnie Hauk to undertake her part in *La Traviata*, which she did with success. Del Puente, our principal baritone, refused, however, to sing the part of the father, in consequence, I presume, of this change.

This was a most fortunate thing for the other baritone, Galassi, who replaced Del Puente. It virtually made his fortune. He possessed the ringing quality of voice the Americans are so fond of. He literally brought down the house that evening. I cannot recall a greater success at any time, and henceforth Galassi became one, as it were, of the idols of the American public.

I opened my theatre in London the following night with a very powerful Company, Mdme. Pappenheim making her *début* as "Fidelio"; for I was now working concurrently the London and

the New York Operas. This I did for the whole of that season, closing Her Majesty's Theatre on the 21st December, though the American "Academy" was kept open beyond.

Costumes, properties, and even singers, were moved to and fro across the ocean in accordance with my New York and London requirements. Franceso, who was ballet-master on both sides of the Atlantic, made again and again the voyage from New York to Liverpool, and from Liverpool to New York. On one occasion the telegraph played me false. I had wired to my acting-manager at Her Majesty's Theatre, with whom I was in daily telegraphic communication, desiring him to send me over at once a "2nd tenor." The message was inaccurately deciphered, and out came "2 tenors;" one of whom was kneeling on the quay at New York returning thanks for his safe arrival, when I requested him to re-embark at once, as otherwise he would not be back at Her Majesty's Theatre by Monday week in time to sing the part of "Arturo" in the *Lucia*, for which he was already announced.

I afterwards produced *Carmen* at the Academy of Music, which met with very great success, as likewise did *Faust*, *Don Giovanni*, etc. It was not till the 8th November that Mdme. Gerster was declared out of danger, and I was in constant attendance upon her until the 18th November, when she appeared as "Amina" in *La Sonnambula*. Her success was really electric, the public going quite wild about her.

I afterwards produced all the great operas I had been giving in London, including the *Magic Flute*, *Talismano*, *Robert le Diable*, etc., etc., my season continuing without intermission some six months, during which time I visited Boston, where public breakfasts and other entertainments were given to my singers. A special train was fitted up expressly for my large Company, and all the carriages elegantly decorated. I had also placed at my disposal by the Railroad Company a carriage containing writing-room, drawing-room, bedrooms, and kitchen stocked with wines and provisions, under the direction of a *chef*.

Whilst at Boston I had the honour of making the acquaintance of Longfellow, who, being anxious to hear Mdme. Gerster, occupied my box one evening, the attention of the audience being very much divided between its occupant and Mdme. Gerster, who on that occasion was singing "Elvira" in *I Puritani*. He likewise attended the final morning performance, which took place on the last Saturday of our engagement, when Gerster's receipts for "Lucia" reached no less than £1,400. We left that evening for Chicago, a distance of some 1,100 miles, arriving in that city just in time to commence the opera the following Monday, when Gerster appeared and created an excitement only equalled by that of Jenny Lind. I recollect, by-the-bye, an amusing incident that occurred the second night, on the occasion of the performance of *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

On the right and left-hand sides of the proscenium were two dressing-rooms alike in every respect. Madame Gerster, however, selected the one on the right-hand side, which at once gave the room the appellation of the prima donna's room. On the following evening *Le Nozze di Figaro* was to be performed, in which Marie Roze was to take the part of "Susanna," and Minnie Hauk that of "Cherubino." In order to secure the prima donna's room Minnie Hauk went to the theatre with her maid as early as three o'clock in the afternoon and placed her dresses in it, also her theatrical trunk.

At four o'clock Marie Roze's maid, thinking to be the first in the field, arrived for the purpose of placing Marie Roze's dresses and theatre trunks in the coveted apartment. Finding the room already occupied, she mentioned it to Marie's husband, who with a couple of stage men speedily removed the trunks and dresses, put them in the room opposite, and replaced them by Marie's. He then went back to his hotel, desiring Marie to be at the theatre as early as six o'clock.

At about 5.30 Minnie Hauk's agent passed by to see if all was in order and found Marie Roze's theatrical box and costumes where Minnie Hauk's were supposed to be. He consequently ordered the removal of Marie Roze's dresses and trunk, replaced those of Minnie Hauk, and affixed to the door a padlock which he had brought with him.

Punctually at six o'clock Marie Roze arrived, and found the door locked. By the aid of a locksmith the door was again opened, and Minnie Hauk's things again removed to the opposite room, whilst Marie Roze proceeded to dress herself in the "prima donna's room."

At 6.30 Minnie Hauk, wishing to steal a march on her rival, came to dress, and found the room occupied. She immediately returned to Palmer House, where she resided, declaring she would not sing that evening.

All persuasion was useless. I therefore had to commence the opera minus "Cherubino;" and it was not until the middle of the second act, after considerable persuasion by my lawyers, that Minnie Hauk appeared on the stage. This incident was taken up throughout the whole of America, and correspondence about it extended over several weeks. Pictures were published, also diagrams, setting forth fully the position of the trunks and the dressing-rooms. The affair is known to this day as "The great dressing-room disturbance."

During all this visit to Chicago there was one unbroken line of intending buyers waiting to secure tickets at the box office; and frequently I had to pay as much as twenty dollars for wood consumed during the night to keep the purchasers warm.

About the middle of the second week I produced Bellini's *Puritani*, with Gerster as "Elvira," Cam-

panini as "Arturo," Galassi as "Riccardo," and Foli as "Giorgio." On this occasion the house was so crowded that the outer walls began to crack, and in the managerial room, in which I was working, I could put my hand through one of the corners where the two walls met. I communicated with Carter Harrison, who was then Mayor. He at once proceeded to the theatre, and, without creating any alarm, and under the pretext that the house was too full, caused upwards of a thousand people to leave the building. So pleased were they with the performance that they all refused to have their money returned.

We terminated one of the most successful Chicago seasons on record, and the Company started the following morning for St. Louis. As I was suffering from a sharp attack of gout I had to be left behind, and but for the kindness of Lord Algernon Lennox (who had acted as my aide-de-camp at one of our Easter sham-fights) and Colonel Vivian I do not know what I should have done. Both these gentlemen remained in the hotel with me, interrupting their journey to do me this act of kindness, for which I felt very grateful.

On the Company's arriving at St. Louis, Mdme. Gerster declared her inability to sing the opera of *Lucia* that evening. My son Henry, who had charge of the Company until I could rejoin it, explained to madame that it would be necessary to have a medical certificate to place before the public. Mdme. Gerster replied she was too honourable an

artist to require such a thing, and that when she said she was ill, she was ill. My son, however, brought in a doctor, who insisted upon seeing her tongue. She merely, in derision, said, "There!"—rapidly putting it out as she left the room. The doctor immediately put on his spectacles, and proceeded to write his certificate, saying that there was a little irritation in the epiglottis, that the uvula was contracted, together with the muscles of the throat, and that the tonsils were inflamed. On Mdme. Gerster's husband showing the certificate to his wife she got so angry that she insisted upon singing—just to show what an "ass" the doctor was. Of course, this answered my purpose very well, and my large receipts were saved.

On leaving the hotel at the end of that week the eminent physician presented Mdme. Gerster with a bill of \$60 for medical attendance. This, of course, she resisted; and she gave bonds for her appearance when called upon, in order to save her trunks from seizure, which the M.D. had threatened.

Whilst I am on this subject, I may as well inform the reader that two years afterwards when we visited St. Louis the matter was brought before the Court. Feeling sure that this attempt at extortion would not be allowed, and that the Court proceedings would be of very short duration, I attended at nine o'clock, the hour set down for trial, leaving word that I should be home at about half-past ten to breakfast. It was not until eleven that I was called up to the

witness-stand. On my mentioning to my counsel that I felt very faint, as I had not yet eaten anything, he repeated it to the judge, who at once adjourned the Court in order that I might have my breakfast. He enjoined me not to lose too much time in "mastication," and ordered the reassembly of the Court at half-past eleven. On my return my evidence was duly given; but when the defendant, Etelka Gerster, was summoned, the call-boy from the theatre appeared, stating to the judge that as she had to sing "Lucia" that night, and was not very well, it would jeopardize the whole performance if she left the hotel.

His honour, thereupon, considerably ordered the Court to adjourn to Mdme. Gerster's rooms at the Lindell House, where the trial could be resumed. On our arrival there counsel and others amused themselves by looking at various pictures until the prima donna appeared, accompanied by her two dogs, her birds, etc., when the judge entered into conversation with her on musical matters. Later on his honour solicited Mdme. Gerster to kindly sing him a song, especially the "Last Rose of Summer," which he was very partial to, being from the Emerald Isle. At the close of the performance he thought it was useless troubling Mdme. Gerster to go further into the case, which was at once decided in her favour.

Talking of law, I may mention another lawsuit in which I was concerned.

Whilst in Boston in January, 1879, Mdme. Parodi, who lived in an hotel close by the theatre, had need of medical attendance, and the theatrical doctor, who had the *entrée* to the house, was naturally selected to see what the matter was. He prescribed a gargle for Mdme. Parodi; and Mdlle. Lido, who had been attending on the patient, having shown the doctor her tongue as he went out, he merely said "You want a little Friedrichshall," and left the room.

Nothing more was heard of the matter until January, 1880, when, as I was seated at the breakfast table in the hotel with my wife and family, two Deputy-Sheriffs forced their way unannounced into the room to arrest me for the sum of 30 dollars, which the doctor claimed as his fee. This was the first intimation I had had of any kind, and it was afterwards shown in evidence that the doctor had debited Parodi and Lido in his day-book separately with the amount which he also charged to them collectively. Finding that both ladies had left the city he thought it better to charge the attendance to me. Rather than be arrested, I of course paid the money, but under protest.

The next day I commenced proceedings against the doctor, as well as the Sheriff, for the return of my money, which I contended had been handed over under duress, and was not a voluntary payment on my part. The doctor's counsel contended on the other hand—first, that I had derived benefit from

the treatment he had given these ladies; secondly, that I was liable. In due course the matter went to trial, and was heard by Judge Parmenter in the Municipal Civil Court at Boston. It was proved that the doctor was the regular physician to the Boston Theatre, and that in consideration of free entrance he attended without fee members of the Company who played there. The Judge, after commenting on the testimony, decided the matter in my favour. I was, however, baulked of both money and costs; for the same afternoon the doctor went home and died.

On my return to New York for the spring opera season I produced *Dinorah*, in which Mdme. Gerster again achieved a triumph. The business went on increasing. About this time a meeting of the stockholders of the Academy of Music was convened, and I ultimately signed a new lease for three more years, commencing October 20th following.

During my first sojourn in America I gave 164 performances of opera, likewise 47 concerts. Concurrently with this I gave 135 operatic performances and 48 concerts in England. The season in New York extended from October 16th to December 28th, 1878, also from February 29th to April 5th, 1879. At Boston the season lasted from December 30th, 1878, to January 11th, 1879; at Chicago from January 13th to 25th; at St. Louis from January 27th to February 1st; at Cincinnati from February 3rd to 8th; at Phila-

delphia 10th to 18th, at Baltimore and Washington 19th to 25th. During this period *Lucia* was performed twenty times, *Sonnambula* nineteen times, *Carmen* twenty-six times, *Faust* sixteen times, *Trovatore* nine times, *Flauto Magico* eight times, *Puritani* eight times, *Nozze di Figaro* seven times, *Rigoletto* five times, *Don Giovanni* five times, *Traviata* four times, *Lohengrin* ten times, *Barbiere* twice, *Ruy Blas* twice, *Dinorah* twice, *Talismano* ten times, *Robert le Diable* twice, *Huguenots* six times, *Freischutz* three times; making altogether twenty-four morning performances and one hundred and forty evening performances.

About this time the disastrous floods took place at Szegedin, in Hungary. This being Mdme. Gerster's birth-place I proposed a grand benefit concert for the sufferers, in which my prima donna at once joined. By our united efforts we raised about £800, which was remitted by cable to the place of disaster within five days of its occurrence, much (I need scarcely add) to the relief of many of the sufferers.

My benefit, which was fixed for the last night of the season, took place on Friday, April 4th. At quite an early hour crowds collected right down Fourteenth Street and Irving Place, and within a very short time every square inch of available room in the house was occupied. The enthusiasm of the auditors was immeasurable, and they began to show it as soon as the performance opened. The representation consisted of the third act of the *Talisman*, with Mdme. Gerster as "Edith Plantaganet," and

Campanini as "Sir Kenneth;" followed by the fourth act of *Favorita*, in which Mdme. Marie Roze undertook the rôle of "Leonora;" and concluding with an act of *La Traviata*, with Mdme. Gerster as "Violetta." Mdme. Gerster's performance was listened to with the deepest attention, and rewarded at the end with enthusiastic cheers. Mdme. Gerster afterwards came out three times, but her courtesies were of no avail in quieting the multitude. It was necessary, at the demand of the public, to raise the curtain and repeat the entire act. Then nothing would satisfy the audience but my appearance on the stage; when I thanked the ladies and gentlemen present for their support, notifying, moreover, that, encouraged by my success, I should return to them the next autumn. This little speech was vehemently applauded, especially the references I made to the singers and to the conductor, who, I promised, would come back with me.

During our stay in New York we were supplied with pianos both for the artists individually as well as for use at the theatre by Messrs. Steinway and Sons; and before we left the following flattering but just letter of compliment and of thanks was addressed to the firm:—

"Academy of Music, New York,

"December 28, 1878.

"GENTLEMEN,

"Having used your pianos in public and private during the present Opera season we desire to express our unqualified admiration of their

sonority, evenness, richness, and astonishing duration of tone, most beautifully blending with and supporting the voice. These matchless qualities, together with the precision of action, in our opinion, render the Steinway pianos, above all others, the most desirable instruments for the public generally.

“(Signed) ETELKA GERSTER, MARIE ROZE,
MINNIE HAUKE, C. SINICO, CAM-
PANINI, FRAPOLLI, GALASSI, FOLI,
DEL PUENTE, ARBITI.”

Messrs. Steinway now offered and undertook to supply each leading member of the Company with pianos in whatever town we might visit throughout the United States.

On our arrival in Philadelphia I was surprised to find that every artist in the Company had had a magnificent Steinway placed in his or her bedroom; this in addition to the pianos required at the theatre. But while the Company were dining, a rival pianoforte maker, who had shown himself keenly desirous of the honour of supplying us with instruments, invaded the different bedrooms and placed the Steinway pianos outside the doors, substituting for them pianos made by his own firm—that of Weber and Co. The Webers, however, were ultimately put outside and the Steinways replaced.

Shortly afterwards a pitched battle took place in the corridors between the men employed by the

rival firms, when the Weber men, being a more sturdy lot, entirely defeated the Steinway men and ejected them bodily from the hotel. The weapons used on this occasion were piano legs, unscrewed from the bodies of the instruments.

Not only did physical force triumph, but the superior strength exhibited by the Weber side was afterwards supplemented by cunning. That very night Weber gave a grand supper to the whole of my Company, and I was at once astonished and amused the next day to find that a new certificate had been signed by them all stating that Weber's pianos were the best they had ever known. A paper to that effect had been passed round after sundry bottles of "Extra Dry," and signatures appended as a matter of course.

Such was the impartiality of my singers that they afterwards signed on behalf of yet a third pianoforte maker, named Haines.

In accordance with numerous solicitations, I agreed to give a Farewell *matinée* the next day. But the steamer had to sail for Europe at two o'clock in the afternoon; and this rendered it necessary that my morning performance should commence at half-past eleven, the box-office opening at eight. In the course of a couple of hours every seat was sold. Towards the close of the performance, Arditì, the conductor, got very anxious, and kept looking up at my box. It was now half-past one, Madame Gerster's *rondo finale* in *La Sonnambula* had absolutely to be

repeated, or there would have been a riot ; and we were some three miles distant from the steamer which was to convey us all to Europe.

At length, to my relief, the curtain fell ; but the noise increased, and I had again to show myself, while Arditì and the principal singers and chorus took their departure, Signor Foli, with his long strides, arriving first. I afterwards hastened down in a carriage I had expressly retained. As the chorus had scarcely time to change their dresses, many of them rushed down as best they could in their theatrical attire, followed by a good portion of the audience, who were anxious to get a last glimpse of us all.

Arriving on board the Inman steamer *City of Chester*, I found it crowded with personal friends, many of whom had been there at least an hour. Hearty embraces were exchanged by the men as well as the women, and numerous bottles of champagne were emptied to fill the parting cups. The cabins of the steamer were literally piled up with flowers. Trunks and boxes containing the wardrobe of the morning performance were lugged on board.

“ All ashore ! ” shouted the captain. Prior to my arrival, the bell had rung for the seventh and positively last time. The steamer’s officers now urged all but passengers to get on shore, and hinted at the probability of some of them being inadvertently carried over to Europe. The

women hurried back to escape that dreadful fate.

Ole Bull, whom I had invited to go to Europe with me, darted across the gang-plank carrying his fiddle in a box. The whistle then blew, and the bell rang for the eighth and now absolutely last time. At length the steamer took her departure. A band of music on the wharf had been playing lively airs, to which my chorus responded by singing the grand prayer from *I Lombardi*.

To my dismay, I discovered that the prima donna had been left behind; also the property-master, the ladies' costumier, one of the ballet, and five of the chorus. The latter had nothing with them but the theatrical costumes they carried on their bodies. They had previously sent all their worldly belongings on board the ship, and we now saw them gesticulating wildly on the quay as we passed down the bay. They were treated very kindly after our departure; ordinary day clothes were provided for them, and they were sent over by the next steamer.

On entering my cabin I found a silver épergne, a diamond collar-stud, any quantity of literature, several boxes of cigars, bottles of brandy, etc., which had been left anonymously; also an immense basket of fruit. There were, moreover, two large set-pieces of flowers in the form of horse-shoes that had been sent me from Boston, likewise a basket of

rose-buds, lilies, and violets, and an embroidered table-cover.

A few minutes later, a tug carrying a large American flag at the side of an English one steamed up to the pier and took on board a number of ladies and gentlemen who, accompanied by an orchestra, followed the steamer down the bay, giving the Company a farewell ovation of cheering as the vessel passed the Narrows and got out to sea.

CHAPTER XV.

RECEPTION OF A TENOR—BELOCCA AND LADY SPENCER
—MARIMON'S SUPERSTITIONS—HER LOVESICK MAID—
AN ENCOURAGING TELEGRAM—MARIMON IN THE
CATHEDRAL—DISAPPEARANCE OF A TENOR.

FOR my London season of 1879, in addition to Gerster, who was already a prime favourite, Marie van Zandt, Clara Louise Kellogg, Minnie Hauk, Ambré, Marie Roze, Caroline Salla, Hélène Crosmond, Trebelli, Nilsson, etc., I engaged Fancelli, Brignoli, Frapolli, and Campanini. I moreover concluded an engagement with Signor Masini, the renowned tenor, who shortly afterwards arrived in London. I was informed the following morning by his agent that he felt very much hurt that I myself, Sir Michael Costa, and some of the leading artists of the theatre had not met him at the station; the agent kindly adding that "If I would come round to his hotel with Costa he might put the thing straight."

I told him we were too busy to do anything of

the kind, but that I should expect Signor Masini to call on me, when I would present him to Sir Michael Costa.

We were within two days of his announced appearance, and I had not yet seen him. That afternoon the agent, who was very anxious to keep things pleasant, rushed in to tell me that Masini was passing along the colonnade outside the theatre smoking a cigar, and that if I went out quickly with Costa we might meet him, and so put an end to all difficulties. I told him I was too busy, and that he had better bring Masini into my office. The signor at length appeared, and in very few words asked me in what opera he was to make his *début*. I told him he had already been announced to appear as "Faust," in accordance with his engagement; to which he replied that he should like to know who the other singers were to be. I told him that Christine Nilsson would be "Margherita," Trebelli "Siebel," and Faure "Mephistopheles," and that I trusted this distribution of parts would suit him. He was good enough to say that he would have no objection to sing with the artists I had named. He then left.

A few minutes afterwards Sir Michael Costa entered the room, and I told him what had happened. He ordered a rehearsal for the following morning at twelve o'clock for all the artists. Nilsson, Faure, and Trebelli were punctually at the theatre, but not Masini; and just as the rehearsal was being dis-

missed in consequence of the tenor's non-attendance his agent appeared with the suggestion that a rehearsal was not necessary. If Sir Michael Costa would step round to the hotel Masini, said the envoy, would show him the *tempi* he wished to be observed in his performance of the part of "Faust." Sir Michael Costa left the room, and never afterwards made the least reference to this audacious proposition.

On going round to Masini's hotel the next morning to see how he was getting on—for he was to perform that evening—I was informed that the previous night he had taken flight, and that he was now on his way back to Italy.

I afterwards heard that an influential friend of Masini's at the Italian Embassy had frightened him by saying that Sir Michael Costa was a man of considerable importance, who was not to be trifled with, and who would probably resent such liberties as Masini had attempted to take with him.

Masini's flight put me to considerable inconvenience. I followed him up on the Continent, harassing him in every city where he attempted to play; though I ultimately let him off on his paying my costs, which came to some £200.

The fact of Signor Masini's asking Sir Michael Costa to come round to his hotel in order to hear the *tempi* at which the arrogant tenor liked his airs to be accompanied, must have taken my readers by surprise. But in Italy, I regret to say, the practice

is only too common for singers to treat conductors as though they were not their directors, but their subordinates. A popular tenor or prima donna receives a much larger salary than an ordinary conductor—or for that matter a first-rate one; and a favourite vocalist at the end of the season often makes a present to the *maestro* to reward him for not having objected to some effective note or cadenza which is out of place, but which the “artist” is in the habit of introducing with a view to some special effect. In his own country it would have been nothing extraordinary for a tenor so eminent as Signor Masini to ask the conductor to step in and learn from him how the different *tempi* should be taken.

On one occasion a renowned prima donna about to make her first appearance in England took the liberty of enclosing to Sir Michael Costa with her compliments a hundred-pound note. The meaning of this was that she wished to be on good terms with the conductor in order that he might not cut her short in any little embellishments, any slackening or hastening of the time, in which she might think fit to indulge. On receiving the note Sir Michael Costa requested the manager to return it to the singer, and at the same time declared that he or the offending vocalist must leave the Company. Needless to say that it was **not** the conductor who left.

Another remark as to Signor Masini's having ex-

pected that Sir Michael Costa, myself, and all the leading members of the Company would meet him at the railway station on his arrival in London. This sort of thing is not uncommon with artists of rank, and when Mdme. Patti comes to London a regular "call" is sent to the various members of the Company directing them, as a matter of duty, to be at the station at such an hour.

A good many artists, on the other hand, have a strong preference for not being met at the station. They travel third-class and in costumes by no means fair to see.

Costa would have been horrified at the way in which operatic enterprises are now too frequently conducted—especially, I mean, in a musical point of view; works hurriedly produced, and in some cases without a single complete rehearsal. Often, no doubt, the prima donna (if sufficiently distinguished to be allowed to give herself airs) is in fault for the insufficient rehearsals or for rehearsals being altogether dispensed with. When such singers as Mdme. Patti and Mdme. Nilsson stipulate that "the utility of rehearsing" shall be left to their judgment—which means that they shall never be called to any sort of rehearsal—all idea of a perfect *ensemble* must, in their case, be abandoned. Sir Michael would, I am sure, have protested against the acceptance of such conditions. Nothing would satisfy him but to go on rehearsing a work until everything, and especially until the *ensemble* pieces, were perfect. Then he would have one final re-

hearsal in order to assure himself that this perfection was maintained; and the opera could be played the night afterwards. Costa was born with the spirit of discipline strong within him. As a singer he would never have made his mark. In his original occupation, that of second tenor, his remarkable qualities were lost. As a conductor, on the other hand, his love of order, punctuality, regularity in everything, stood him in excellent part.

At many operatic theatres the performance begins some five or ten minutes after the time announced; at no theatre where Sir Michael Costa conducted did it ever begin a minute late. The model orchestral chief arrived with a chronometer in each of his waistcoat pockets; and when, after consulting his timepieces, he saw that the moment for beginning had arrived, he raised his *bâton*, and the performance began. He did not even take the trouble to see that the musicians were all in their places. He knew that, with the discipline he maintained, they must be there.

Among other difficulties which an operatic manager has often to deal with is one arising from questions of precedence between the singers. Who is to have the best dressing-room at the theatre? Who the best suite of apartments at the hotel? Naturally the prima donna. But suppose there is more than one prima donna in the Company, or that the contralto claims to be an artist of greater eminence than the principal soprano?

I remember once arriving at Dublin with a Company which included among its members Mdlle. Salla, who played leading soprano parts, and Mdlle. Anna de Belocca, a Russian lady, who played and sang with distinction the most important parts written for the contralto voice. Mdlle. Belocca and Mdlle. Salla entered at the same time the best suite of apartments in the hotel; upon which each of them exclaimed: "These rooms will do for me."

"For you?" said Mdlle. Salla. "The prima donna has, surely, the right of choice, and I have said that I wish to have them."

"Prima donna!" exclaimed Belocca, with a laugh. "There are but two prime donne: *moi et Patti*."

"You will not have these rooms all the same," continued the soprano.

"We will see about that," returned the contralto.

I was in despair, for it was now a matter of personal dignity. Neither lady would give way to the other. Leaving them for a time together I went downstairs to the hotel-keeper, Mr. Maple, and said to him —

"Have you not another suite of rooms as good, or nearly so, as the one for which these ladies are disputing?"

"I have a very good suite of rooms on the second floor," said Maple; "quite as good, I think, as those on the first floor." These rooms had already been pointed out to Mdlle. de Belocca through the

window. But nothing, she said, would induce her to go upstairs, were it only a step.

"Come with me, then," I said to Maple. "Mind you don't contradict me; and to begin with, it must be understood that these rooms on the second floor have been specially retained by Lady Spencer"—Lord Spencer was at that time Viceroy of Ireland—"and cannot on any account, or under any circumstances, be assigned even for a brief time to anyone else."

Maple seized my idea, and followed me upstairs.

"What is the meaning of this?" I said to him, when we were together, in the presence of the two excited vocalists. "Are these the only rooms you have to offer us? They will do for one of these ladies; but whichever accepts them the other must be provided with a set of apartments at least as good."

"I simply have not got them," replied Maple. "There is a charming set of apartments on the floor above, but they are specially retained for the Countess Spencer, and it would be more than my business is worth to let anyone else take possession of them."

At these words Belocca opened her beautiful eyes, and seemed to be struck with an idea.

"At least we could see them?" I suggested.

"You could see them," returned Maple, "but that is all."

"Let us go and have a look at them," I said.

Maple and myself walked upstairs. Belocca silently followed us. We pretended not to see her, but as soon as the door of the apartments reserved for the Countess Spencer was thrown open the passionate young Muscovite rushed into them, shut the door, and locked it, declaring that Lady Spencer must be provided for elsewhere.

On the conclusion of my London season of 1879 I immediately started for the Continent in search of talent for my next New York and London seasons, which both commenced on the 18th October.

On the issue of my New York prospectus, every box, together with three-fourths of the *parquet*, likewise the first two rows of balcony, were sold out for the season; so good an impression had my performances left the previous spring.

I must here mention a circumstance which greatly inconvenienced me. On the day of sailing from Liverpool I received notice that Mdme. Gerster was in a delicate condition, which was confirmed afterwards by a cable which reached me on my arrival in New York. I replied, entreating the lady to 'come over, if only for a couple of months, when she could afterwards return. All my proposals failed, though it was not until I received five doctors' certificates from Italy sealed by the Prefetto and viséd by the Consuls that I gave up begging her to appear.

I was really at my wits' ends, for there was no possibility of replacing the favourite artist. I,

however, engaged Mdlle. Valleria, also Mdlle. Ambré, a Moorish prima donna of some ability and possessing great personal charms.

Despite all I could do, the Press and the public became excited about the absence of Gerster; and either she or Lucca or Nilsson, or someone of equal calibre, was urgently wanted. It was too late for either of these distinguished ladies to entertain my proposals. I, therefore, addressed Mdlle. Marimon, who was then in Paris.

About this time the members of my orchestra, who all belonged to the Musical Union, struck for a ten per cent. increase of pay in consequence of the success I had met with the previous year. I flatly refused to comply with their demand, whereupon the main body of the players informed me that they would not enter the orchestra on my opening night, unless their terms were conceded. I explained that the previous year I had paid them no less than 50,000 dollars, being more than double the price of my London orchestra, but it was all to no avail. However, I induced them to play at my opening performance, leaving the matter to be decided at a conference to be held in the course of a few days.

To return to Mdlle. Marimon; time being of importance, all our correspondence had to be carried on by cable, I having to pay the answers. As at the time I speak of the price was some fifty cents or two shillings a word, and as the correspondence went on for over a fortnight, I found at last that I had spent

over £160 in cables alone. The lady insisting that the money should be deposited beforehand at Rothschild's, in Paris, this, too, had to be transmitted by cable.

At length a day was fixed for her departure, and I awaited with impatience her arrival. Some four days later I received a cable from my agent, Jarrett, who had gone over at my request to Paris, informing me that Marimon had not started and that a new element of trouble had arisen.

Mdlle. Marimon having lost her mother some time before in the foundering of the *Pacific* steamship was nervous about going to sea, and would not start unless accompanied by her maid. The maid, however, objected to go with her mistress to America on a visit which might last some months. She was attached at the time to an actor at the Gymnase, and preferred remaining in Paris. She knew her mistress to be very superstitious, and, in order to avoid starting, resolved to play on her weak point. Pretending, therefore, to be ignorant of Marimon's intentions, she imparted to that lady the secret of a terrible dream with which she had been visited three nights in succession, to the effect that she and her mistress had embarked in a big ship for a long voyage, and that upon the third day at sea the vessel had collided with another and both had gone to the bottom. This fable had the desired effect. With blanched cheeks the frightened Marimon, who was still in Paris, informed

Jarrett that it was impossible for her to go, and that she wished to have her engagement cancelled. To this I refused to accede, the engagement being complete and the money having been paid.

Volumes of cable messages were now again commenced. Here is a copy of one of my replies:—

“Tranquil sea. Charming public. Elegant city. Luxurious living. For Heaven’s sake come, and duplicate your Drury Lane triumphs.—MAPLESON.”

At length tact and diplomacy overcame her terrors, and she started in the *City of Richmond* the following day.

I was expecting her with the greatest anxiety, for several days had now passed beyond the ordinary time, when on the morning of November 24th I read in the morning papers the following telegram from Halifax:—

“The steamer *Circassia* of the Anchor Line, with the American mail, came into port this morning, having picked up the disabled ship the *City of Richmond*, encountering heavy weather, with a broken shaft, off Sable Island, 180 miles from Halifax, the second officer having been washed overboard and lost. Amongst the saloon passengers were Mdlle. Marimon and her maid.”

I thereupon despatched messengers to Halifax, and in due course Mdlle. Marimon reached New York.

On her arrival she immediately insisted on going to the Catholic Cathedral, in Fiftieth Street, to offer

up thanks and a candle for her narrow escape. Despite all my entreaty to cease praying, in consequence of the extreme cold in the vast Cathedral—it was now near the close of November—madame remained prostrate for another half-hour, during which time my rehearsal was waiting. I had hoped to get her to attend by inviting her to have a look at the interior of the theatre where she was to perform.

The result, meanwhile, of her devotions was that she caught a violent cold and was obliged to lie in bed for a week afterwards.

I was next much troubled by a renewed outbreak in the orchestra, the occasion being the first performance of *Linda di Chamouni*, when to my astonishment more than half the musicians were absent. I was too perplexed with other matters to worry beyond appealing to the public, who sympathized with me.

A kind of operatic duel was now going on betwixt my two tenors; Campanini and Aramburo. The latter, with his magnificent voice, had quite conquered New York. Being a Spaniard, his own countrymen supported him nightly by their presence in large numbers. But the tenor was displeased at sundry hisses which came from unknown quarters of the gallery, whilst two or three newspapers attacked him without any reason. It was the eve of his performance in *Rigoletto* when I was informed that Senor Aramburo and the Gilda, Mdme. Adini

(at that time his wife), had suddenly sailed for Europe. The last I could trace of them was that that very day they had both been seen in the city at five o'clock. Early that morning Aramburo had come to me wanting to borrow 300 dollars. At first I refused, but he pressed me, saying that he had property "in Spain," and that he really needed money to close up certain business transactions. I gave him the sum, and this was the last I saw of him. At 5.30, however, in the afternoon, I received a note from him, in which he said that he would like five nice seats for that evening's performance, as he wished to oblige some friends. I sent him the tickets, but by the time they reached his address he must have packed up and gone.

At length the day for Mdlle. Marimon's appearance arrived. It was not until Wednesday, 3rd December, that she made her *début* in *La Sonnambula*, when she was supported by Campanini as "Elvino," Del Puente as "Conte Rodolfo," and Mdme. Lablache as the mother. Mdlle. Marimon scored a positive success, and the ovations she received were something unprecedented. I at once forgot all my troubles, for I now plainly foresaw that she would replace Mdme. Gerster until the following year. Anything like her success had not been witnessed since Gerster's. At one bound, as it were, she leaped into the highest favour and esteem of the music lovers of New York. I announced her reappearance for the following Monday.

But the reaction consequent on the agitation caused to her by the perils of the sea voyage now began to manifest itself. The nervousness from which she had suffered at sea, in the belief that her maid's dream was about to be verified, had caused such a disturbance to her nervous system that this, coupled with the subsequent excitement due to her brilliant success, caused the fingers of both her hands to be drawn up as if with cramp. She found it impossible to reappear for several days; and it was not until the 15th, some twelve days later, that she was able to give her second performance. She afterwards sang the part of the "Queen of Night," in *Flauto Magico*, which terminated the New York season.

We afterwards left for Boston, where on the opening night Mdlle. Marimon's success was again most marked; and from the beginning until the end of the engagement there her receipts equalled those of Mdme. Gerster. During the tour we visited Philadelphia, Chicagò, St. Louis, Detroit, and Cleveland. We afterwards made a second visit to Philadelphia, the season concluding about the middle of March, 1880, when we returned to Europe.

During our stay in Philadelphia Mdlle. Marimon, who had met with such great success two evenings previously, was announced to appear as "Dinorah." About six o'clock in the afternoon she sent word that she would be unable to sing. All persuasion on my part was useless. However, as I was

descending the staircase of the hotel I met Brignoli, who on hearing of my trouble declared that he had a remedy and that he felt sure he could induce Mdlle. Marimon to sing. He made it a condition, however, that in case of success I should re-engage him for the approaching London season. To this I readily consented, and I was greatly surprised at hearing within half an hour that Mdlle. Marimon and her maid had gone on to the theatre. This was indeed a relief to me, as nearly every seat in the theatre had been sold, Meyerbeer's romantic opera not having been performed in Philadelphia for some twenty years.

On the rising of the curtain Mdlle. Marimon's voice was inaudible. She was very warmly greeted, and went through all the gestures of the part; played it, in short, pantomimically. At the close of the act I went before the curtain, and announced that Mdlle. Marimon's voice, instead of recovering itself, was going gradually from bad to worse; and that the shadow scene in the second act would have to be omitted; but that, to compensate the public for the disappointment, Signor Campanini, who was then present in one of the boxes, had kindly consented, together with Miss Cary, to give the concluding acts of *Il Trovatore*. This at once restored the depressed spirits of the audience.

Miss Cary surprised everyone by the dramatic force of her "Azucena." Galassi was equally effective in the rôle of the "Count di Luna." But Campanini, in *Di quella pira*, met with more than a

success : it was a triumph. The house broke into rapturous applause, and cheered the singer to the echo. At the conclusion he was loaded with flowers. Thus I avoided the misfortune of having to close the theatre.

On returning home to supper I discovered the "remedy" Brignoli had employed, which was this : He presented himself on leaving me to Mdlle. Marimon, and informed her that he understood Mapleson meant to close up the Opera-house that evening, and charge her the value of the receipts, then estimated at nearly £1,000. He, therefore, advised her to go to the theatre, even if she walked through the part.

One or two newspapers the following morning insisted on regarding my speech of the previous evening as a melancholy joke. I had announced that Mdlle. Marimon was physically unable to fulfil the demands of her *rôle*, and that she would omit the shadow song. But, said the papers, her efforts throughout the evening had all been shadow songs, the little lady having been absolutely voiceless.

Mdlle. Marimon, however, in settling up the account some weeks afterwards, charged me £120 for this performance, arguing that she had appeared and done her best under the circumstances.

CHAPTER XVI.

SIR MICHAEL AND HIS CHEQUE—SIX MINUTES' BANKRUPTCY—SUCCESS OF "LOHENGRIN"—PRODUCTION OF "MEFISTOFELE"—RETURN TO NEW YORK—"LOHENGRIN" UNDER DIFFICULTIES—ELSA'S TAILS—CINCINNATI OPERA FESTIVAL.

I BEGAN my London season of 1880 a few days after my return from the United States, Mdme. Christine Nilsson appearing as "Margherita" in *Faust* on the opening night, followed by *La Sonnambula*, *Carmen*, *Aida*, etc., also *Lohengrin*, for which I had specially entered into an engagement with Richter, who after some fifteen rehearsals declared the work ready for presentation. He at the same time informed me that on looking through the orchestral parts he had discovered no less than 430 mistakes which had been passed over by his predecessor, Sir Michael Costa, and which he had corrected.

About this time law proceedings were pretty hot between myself and Sir Michael Costa, and as they

led to my becoming a bankrupt for about six minutes, I may as well explain to the reader how this occurred.

My engagement with Sir Michael Costa was for a season of three months in each year, for which I was to give him £1,500—£500 each month, payable in advance. My season of 1875 was fixed to open on the 24th April, and to terminate on the 24th July, which it actually did ; but having at that time secured the services of the great tragedian Salvini, I thought it desirable to open the theatre about a fortnight earlier, giving opera only twice or three times a week, and utilizing the other nights for the appearances of Salvini. I mentioned my idea to Costa, who said I had better pay him his regular cheque as from the commencement of the season, and that the few extra nights could be settled for apart.

On the 10th July Sir Michael Costa asked for his usual monthly cheque in advance. I reminded him of our conversation on the subject, and pointed out to him that I had already made him the three payments as agreed. He told me that he wanted particularly to have the cheque, as he desired to show it to H.R.H. ; adding with a mysterious air : “ You will be pleased ! ” From his manner he led me to believe that he would return me the cheque after it had been shown. I, therefore, gave it to him ; and, hearing no more of it for five years, thought he had destroyed it. However, prior to

my announcing my season of 1880, application was made for the payment of this cheque. Sir Michael declined, in fact, to wield the *bâton* unless the old cheque were paid. He seemed quite determined on the subject; and I, on my part, was equally determined to resist the demand. I made various propositions for an equitable adjustment, as also did several influential friends; but all to no purpose. Sir Michael Costa, like Shylock, insisted on his bond; and the law was allowed to take its course. In the end the "blue paper" was signed by Mr. Registrar Hazlitt constituting me a bankrupt, and I left the Court in a state of depression quite unusual to me.

We had scarcely got outside when a happy thought struck my solicitor, who, hurrying back with me to the Registrar, addressed him as follows:—

"Pending the appointment of a trustee, which may take some eight or nine days, your honour is, in fact, the manager of Her Majesty's Theatre, and my client thinks it only right to take your honour's orders as to the production of *Lohengrin* on Saturday. Some new skirts, moreover, which might be of calico, but which your honour would, perhaps, prefer of silk, are wanted for the ballet in *Il Trovatore* next Monday. But the *Lohengrin* matter is the more pressing of the two, and we should be glad if you would meet Herr Richter, who, though unwilling to tamper with the score of so great a

composer as Wagner, thinks some cuts, already on another occasion authorized by the master, might be ventured upon in the long duet between "Elsa" and "Ortrud." There is an obstinate tenor, moreover, whom your honour, by adopting a decided tone towards him, might perhaps bring to reason."

Mr. Registrar Hazlitt was amazed, and in tones of something like dismay declared that he had trouble enough where he was, and could not undertake the management of an Opera-house. He had not considered that, he continued, when he signed the paper. He rang for a messenger, caused the paper to be brought to him, and at once tore it up; thus putting an end to my six minutes of bankruptcy.

Lohengrin met with very great success, and we ran it alternately with *Carmen*, *Don Giovanni*, *Faust*, and several other operas, in which Mdle. Gerster maintained her pre-eminence. During all this time we were busily rehearsing Boito's *Mefistofele*, which I was unable to produce until the early part of July. The following was the cast:—

| | | |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| "Margherita" and "Helen of Troy" | } | Mdme. Christine Nilsson. |
| "Martha" and "Pantalis" ... | | |
| "Mefistofele" | | Signor Nannetti. |
| "Faust" | | Signor Campanini. |

The rehearsals were under the immediate personal superintendence of the composer Boito, and the

scenic department under that of the celebrated scene-painter Magnani. The greatest pains were taken to give such a representation of this opera as would be worthy of the composer's high reputation.

At last the day arrived, the 6th July; but not the properties, which were expected in large cases from Italy, but could not be heard of and were nowhere to be found. I went to all the likely places in London, telegraphed to Boulogne and to Calais, but in vain. Finally, however, at half-past six in the evening, they were brought to the stage door.

The reader cannot, of course, understand the enormous difficulty which arose in unpacking these hundreds of various properties, each one done up in separate paper. At last shields, armour, spears, serpents, goblets, torches, demon's wigs, etc., etc., were all piled up on the stage. The supernumeraries and chorus were ready dressed, and were left to help themselves, the supers, who were all guardsmen, picking out the prettiest properties they could find; and it was with immense difficulty that, with Boito's aid, we could distribute the most necessary for the performance. The success of this opera is doubtless fresh in the minds of most lovers of music. I look upon it as one of the most memorable on record. It went without a hitch. Madame Nilsson as "Margherita" impressed me by her singing and acting in the prison scene as she had never done before. The opera was repeated

every other night until the close of the season, the receipts continually increasing.

At the close of my London season I again went to the Continent in quest of talent, and paid a visit to Mdme. Gerster at her elegant villa near Bologna. She received me with every expression of delight, and we concluded forthwith our arrangements for her return to America, she making it a condition that the baby should accompany her. I now made great preparations to ensure a brilliant season. Great improvements were made by the Directors in the auditorium of the Academy of Music in New York, and new carpet was everywhere laid down. At my suggestion, too, a few feet were cut from the front of the stage, which improved the proscenium boxes, and gave me two extra rows of stalls or *parquet* seats, numbering sixty in all. These were immediately let at high premiums for the whole of my season. Preparations were afterwards made for the production of Boito's *Mefistofele*, which had been such a great success during my past London season.

As I found it desirable not to leave myself entirely in the hands of one principal tenor, I concluded arrangements whereby Signor Ravelli was to form part of my Company. Ravelli made his *début* as "Edgardo" in *Lucia di Lammermoor* on the opening night, when Mdme. Gerster made her *rentrée*, after an absence of a year, as "Lucia." The house was crowded from floor to ceiling, Mdme. Gerster receiving more than her usual ovations.

The following night Campanini made his re-appearance as "Fernando" in *La Favorita*, Miss Annie Louise Cary undertaking her unrivalled impersonation of "Leonora."

Wishing to do all in my power to make the production of *Mefistofele* a representation of the first class in every respect, I caused to be removed from each end of the orchestra some five-and-twenty *parquet* seats in order that it might be enlarged, and I engaged some twenty-five extra musicians of ability so that the *ensemble* of my orchestra might be equal to that of London. Arditi was indefatigable with his rehearsals, of which he had several, in order to obtain every possible perfection in the execution of the music, to secure even the minutest *nuances* in the necessary light and shade. The cast included Signor Campanini as "Faust," Annie Louise Cary as "Martha" and "Pantalis," a new-comer, Signor Novara, as "Mefistofele," whilst Alwina Valleria undertook the *rôle* of "Margherita"—and right well did the little lady fulfil the task she had undertaken. She had moments at which she showed herself quite equal to Mdme. Nilsson, especially in the prison scene.

In the newspapers the following morning no mention whatever was made either of the increase in my orchestra or of its performance; the critics at that time being less discerning than they are now. This greatly mortified Arditi, who had been working like a slave for so long a time before the production.

We shortly afterwards produced *Mignon*, when Arditi said one rehearsal would do, as sure enough it did; and this time we met with great praise. On my returning for the following spring season I dispensed with the services of my twenty-five extra musicians; and the excellence of the orchestra was now fully commented upon.

About this time I remounted *Aida* in grand style, with new properties, scenery, and dresses, Mdme. Gerster shortly afterwards appearing as "Elsa" in *Lohengrin*. This reminds me of an interesting occurrence.

The fatigues incident to the continued rehearsals of *Lohengrin* had rather unnerved Mdme. Gerster, who, however, made her appearance in the rôle of "Elsa" on the night for which the opera had been originally announced. Her success, though great, was not what she desired, and the next day she complained of indisposition, though she at the same time insisted upon further rehearsals. I therefore closed the theatre at great loss, in order that her desires might be complied with.

At length the time for the second performance arrived. I had spent a fatiguing day, and had finished up with directing the difficult machinery of the scene in which the swan disappears to be replaced by the missing child, while the dove comes down from heaven to draw the boat which, as "Elsa" embraces her long-lost brother, bears "Lohengrin" away.

Feeling sure that all was in order, I went home for a short time, not having tasted anything since early morn. I sat down to my dinner, and ordered my servant to bring me a pint of champagne. I had hardly taken the knife and fork into my hand when Dr. Gardini, Mdme. Gerster's husband, put his head through the door, beckoning to me, and saying that he wanted me for one "second" only. On my getting into the vestibule he entreated me to come over a moment to the Everett House, where his wife was residing, it being then about a quarter to seven (my opera was to commence at eight). On my reaching the Everett House her maid, her brother, and her sister-in-law desired me to step a moment into her bedroom. On entering I smelt a powerful odour of chloroform, and on inquiry found that her brother, who was a medical man of some standing in New York, had been prescribing chloroform to allay a tooth-ache, or some other ailment she was suffering from; but in the nervous condition she was in it had acted rather too violently upon her general system, and there she lay speechless.

I was beside myself, and I am afraid rather rude at the moment to those in attendance. However, I insisted upon taking the matter entirely into my own hands. I commenced by opening the tops of the windows so as to let the odour out, and dispatched the sister to get me a bottle of soda-water, together with some sal-volatile, also a bottle of strong smelling salts. By raising Mdme. Gerster's head

I got her to take the soda-water and sal-volatile, and at each respiration I took good care to place the smelling-bottle to her nose, but all to no effect. She was in a state of semi-unconsciousness.

I, however, insisted upon raising her (it being then a quarter past seven), and by the aid of the maid I put a large shawl over her, and carried her off in my arms to the carriage, which I had ordered to be at the door, and took her over to the Academy, where I seated her on a chair. She now swooned on to the dressing-table.

Whilst I continued to apply the smelling-bottle I gave directions to the theatrical hair-dresser to be careful to come gently in and comb out her back hair and plait in the little tails which are sometimes added by prime donne. It was about twenty minutes to eight when Arditì came into the room, accompanied by the call-boy, and both looked upon the matter as hopeless. I, however, begged the maestro to go into the orchestra, and to leave the rest to me.

I got her to stand upright; but when I suggested the idea of singing "Elsa" she sighed, and said —

"It is utterly useless. It is just eight o'clock, and the tails are not in my hair."

I thereupon informed her that during her unconscious state I had carefully had the tails combed in. This brought a faint smile to her face, and I at once saw that there was still a chance of my opera going. I led her to the entrance, when she went on

accompanied by her attendant maidens. I then drew a long breath and went back to finish my dinner, knowing now that the opera would continue.

Long before the first act was completed Mdme. Gerster's energies had returned. She was in full possession of her marvellous vocal powers, and a triumphant evening was the result of my labours.

About this time I commenced autumn Sunday evening concerts, in which the whole of my singers took part, the first portion of the evening beginning, as a rule, with a fine performance of Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, Valleria, Cary, Campanini, Galassi, and Novara singing the music very effectively. The houses were invariably crowded to the roof.

About this time, I settled a grand opera festival for Cincinnati the ensuing spring, in conjunction with the College of Music, and for that purpose organized a chorus of some 400 extra voices, and an orchestra of some 150 musicians; after which I left for Chicago to confer with Colonel George Nichols as to the arrangements.

We afterwards visited Boston, where our performances met with the greatest possible success, each week's receipts averaging no less than 35,000 dollars, the reappearance of Mdme. Etelka Gerster creating immense excitement. At the *matinée* given on January 1st, at which she appeared, upwards of 100 ladies' odd india-rubber overshoes were picked up on the family circle stair-

case lost in the rush after the opening of the doors, there being a heavy snowstorm raging at the time. The receipts were over £1,200 notwithstanding. *Aida, Mefistofele, Carmen, Don Giovanni, and Puritani* completed the week's *répertoire*. We afterwards left for Philadelphia, followed by Baltimore, Washington, Pittsburg, Indianapolis, Chicago, and St. Louis, the Opera being a signal success all along the line. We closed up on the Saturday night at St. Louis, leaving by special train at 1 a.m., shortly after the conclusion of the night's representation, for Cincinnati. The soloists, choristers, and orchestra arrived at about three o'clock on the Sunday afternoon, rather tired; and they spent this afternoon in hunting up hotels and boarding-houses. In the evening we had a stage rehearsal of *Lohengrin*, with chorus and part of the orchestra. My own chorus was on hand, together with the Cincinnati contingent some 350 strong—all present without a single absentee. But large as the stage was there was plenty of room for all and to spare. The beautiful *Lohengrin* choruses were finely rendered, and the volume of tone resounding through the vast building was truly grand. The rehearsal was afterwards dismissed, and everyone retired to rest.

Early the following morning the final rehearsal was called, which terminated at twelve o'clock; and that same evening the first great Opera Festival was inaugurated—undoubtedly the most daring musical enterprise ever attempted in America or any other

country. The sight of the audience from the private boxes was worth a journey to see. It was one sea of faces. Everything looked auspicious for the success of the festival. The weather was pleasant, the crowds were large and enthusiastic, and the singers were *en rapport* with the audience, whilst the chorus did its very best.

The orchestra, also, was the finest ever heard in Cincinnati, composed of 150 first-class musicians, who did their work splendidly. In fact, the *ensemble* was complete.

The scene outside the hall was one of bewildering confusion. Myriads of elegant carriages darting round corners, pedestrians jostling against each other to arrive before the doors were closed, an immense rabble outside, who had gone to catch only a glimpse of the handsomely-dressed ladies as they went in; such was the scene, which, I must add, was illuminated by the newly-invented electric light. In spite of the most stringent police regulations the streets were blocked, and it is not surprising that there were several horrible accidents. Notwithstanding four wide exits it was an hour and a half after the performance was over before the last carriage could get off.

The toilettes of the ladies, for which Cincinnati is so famous, were most elegant. Our grand performance of *Lohengrin* was followed by Mozart's *Magic Flute*, Mdme. Gerster singing the rôle of the "Queen of Night." The third opera was Boito's

Mefistofele, for which 8,000 reserved seats were sold. The fourth night we had *Lucia di Lammermoor*, followed by an act from *Moses in Egypt*; the extreme back of the stage representing a burning sun, and the whole 400 choristers joining together with the principals in the grand prayer, "Dal tuo stellato soglio," which terminates the opera. On the fifth night Verdi's *Aida* was given with entirely new scenery, painted for the occasion, together with new dresses and properties.

A morning performance, *La Sonnambula*, was given next day, with Gerster. The audience, like all the previous ones, was immense. Every seat was occupied, whilst 2,000 people who had paid two dollars apiece were standing up. The toilettes of the ladies were simply magnificent, baffling all description. The audience went wild over Gerster, encores were demanded and re-demanded, people hurrahed and waved their handkerchiefs, whilst the most expensive bouquets and flowers were pelted on the prima donna, who at last was embowered in roses.

On the last evening Gounod's *Faust* was performed. The end was as glorious as the beginning. By seven o'clock the big hall was again filled, and at half-past seven, when Arditi took up the *bâton*, the house was packed and jammed from the top-most part of the gallery.

The audiences throughout the week were most brilliant. Before separating a Committee meeting

was held; and it was resolved that the festival should be renewed the following year, when Mdme. Patti and Mdme. Albani should, if possible, be added to the list of vocalists.

This was followed by a grand banquet at the club, where amongst others I had the honour of making the acquaintance of Mr. Reuben Springer, the donor of the magnificent hall in which the festival had been held.

The profits of the week reached 50,000 dollars. We afterwards visited Detroit, Syracuse, and Albany, returning to New York in the early part of March.

On the 25th March a morning performance was given of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, when the Academy was fairly packed from *parquet* to gallery by a most fashionable audience, not so much to hear *Lucia* as to hear Mdme. Gerster. At the rush at the opening of the doors the ticket-taker discovered a forged free pass purporting to bear my name. On his own responsibility he handed over to the police the two men who had come in with the ticket, and they were taken off to the police-station, where I was immediately sent for.

The forgery being proved they were both committed for trial, the magistrate at the same time notifying that if we took them up at once in an elevated train to Ninety-second Street the assizes would be on, and their case could be at once decided.

They were duly taken on, and the matter gone

into. One of the men was committed to prison for a year, and the other one was placed under the care of the Commissioners of Charities and Corrections for two years on Randall's Island.

I got back to the Academy in time to hear the mad scene.

On returning the following year I made inquiry as to the man who had been sent to the Reformatory, and was informed that he had died only the day before. So also had the judge of the Assize Court : a remarkable coincidence.

We remained in New York until the 9th April, when we were again called to Boston to give six performances, each of which averaged \$5,000. After a *matinée* on the Saturday we returned to New York by special train, in order to give a Sunday concert, when over 4,000 dollars were taken at the doors. We then gave six more extra farewell performances in New York, sailing for Europe immediately on the conclusion of the last one, and arriving in London about six days prior to the opening of my season.

Early in the spring of 1881 I received a communication from Messrs. Ricordi, of Milan, the publishers and proprietors of Boito's *Mefistofele*, in which they solicited me to allow Signor Nannetti, the basso, who was then performing the title rôle at the Scala, to delay his engagement with me for the period of a fortnight, in order that the successful run of the work might not be interrupted ;

in exchange for which they offered me the services of the musical director, Signor Faccio. To this I consented, and the eminent conductor was duly announced in my prospectus. But instead of keeping Nannetti two weeks in Milan they kept him five, during which time my season had opened and Mdme. Nilsson had arrived in London in order that I might take up the successful run of *Mefistofele* which had been interrupted only by the close of the previous season. Mdme. Nilsson, however, refused to appear until Nannetti came; and it was not until the 23rd June that I could reproduce Boito's *Mefistofele*. Faccio never turned up at all.

CHAPTER XVII.

PRODUCTION OF "IL RINNEGATO"—RAVELLI'S OPERATIC THEORY — NEGOTIATIONS WITH COVENT GARDEN "LIMITED"—A SEARCH FOR A PRIMA DONNA—FAILURE OF PATTI'S CONCERTS—CINCINNATI OPERA FESTIVAL OF '82—PATTI'S INDISPOSITION.

MY London season of 1881 commenced at Her Majesty's Theatre, on the 7th May. Nothing of note took place prior to the arrival of Mdme. Christine Nilsson, who appeared on the 28th as "Margherita" in *Faust*, which character she repeated, together with "Mignon," until the 23rd June, when, after two postponements, we were enabled to reproduce Boito's *Mefistofele*. The attraction of this opera had, however, considerably diminished, possibly on account of its having been produced so late in the previous season, when a few performances were given, and afterwards interrupted for a period of nearly ten months. During this time negotiations were entered into between Baron Bodog Orczy and myself for the production of an

opera composed by the Baron on a Hungarian subject, and entitled *The Renegade*; in Italian *Il Rinnegato*.

Baron Orczy, friend and pupil of Liszt, and a fervent admirer of Wagner's works, had been the Intendant of the Royal Theatre at Pesth, where he at once gave a proof of keen musical discernment by engaging Richter as his orchestral conductor. Report said that he had given up his important post by reason of representations made to him on the subject of his excessive devotion to Wagnerian music. However that may be, the Baron had shown himself by several excerpts from his opera, performed at St. James's Hall and at the Crystal Palace, to be a composer of no mean ability. He handled the orchestra with skill and power, and if his opera did not prove so successful with the general public as his friends must have desired, that result may partly be accounted for by the over-elaboration of the score, and the importance attached by the composer to the instrumental portions of his work.

Composed to a Hungarian libretto, *The Renegade*, of which the subject was derived from an historical romance by a popular Hungarian novelist, had, with a view to production at my theatre, been translated into Italian; and two of the leading parts had been assigned to Ravelli the tenor, and Galassi the baritone.

Ravelli had not long been a member of my Company; he was one of my chance discoveries. One

evening, as so often happened, I was at the last moment in want of a tenor. The hall porter, finding that I was sending about London in quest of a possibly suitable vocalist, told me that a dark little man with a tenor voice had been hanging about the stage-door, and the Colonnade in front of the theatre, for some ten days past, and that he was sure to be somewhere in the neighbourhood. The artist in question was found. I asked him whether he could really sing. His answer may be guessed; and when I further questioned him as to whether he knew the part of "Edgardo" he replied that he did, and in some measure verified his assertion by singing portions of it. He showed himself the possessor of a fine, clear, resonant voice; and if he sometimes sang without true dramatic expression, and without the grace which springs from perfect art, he at least knew how to thrill the public with a high note effectively thrown in.

It is not my purpose, however, for good or ill, to criticize the singing of Signor Ravelli. I am now dealing with him only in so far as he was connected with the opera of *Il Rinnegato*. In the second act of that work the tenor and baritone fight a duel. In this there was no novelty. But instead of the tenor killing the baritone, the baritone puts the tenor to death, and this struck Signor Ravelli as far too new. He appealed to operatic traditions and asked in an excited manner whether such a thing was heard of before. "No!" he exclaimed,

answering with vigour his own question ; and he added that though he was quite ready to take part in the duel, he would do so on condition that not he but his antagonist should be slain. It was useless to explain to him that in the story upon which the opera was based the character represented by the tenor perished, while the baritone lived on. This, he said, was just what he complained of. " Why," he indignantly demanded, " should the tenor's part in the opera be thus cut short ? But why, above all, should the habitual impersonator of heroes fall beneath the sword of one who was accustomed only to play a villain's part ? "

It was impossible to get the infatuated man to hear reason on the subject. He cried, screamed, uttered oaths, and at one time threatened to kill with his dagger, not only his natural enemy, the baritone, but everyone around him. " I will kill them all ! " he shrieked.

After a time, by humouring him and agreeing with him that in a well-ordered operatic duel the tenor ought, of course, to kill the baritone, I got him to listen to me ; and I at last contrived to make him understand that there were exceptions to all rules, and that it would be generous on his part to overlook the species of indignity to which he was asked to submit, the affront offered to him not having been intended as such, either by the librettist or, above all, by the amiable composer. It was settled then that Ravelli was to be killed. But what, he

wished to know, was to be done with his body after death? The proper thing would be, he said, for six attendants to enter, raise the corpse, and carry it solemnly away to a place of repose.

It mattered little to me whether the body of Ravelli was borne from off the stage by six, eight, or a dozen attendants. But according to the plan of the opera he had to lie where he had fallen while the soprano, whom in his character of tenor he had passionately loved, sang a lament over his much-loved form. I told Ravelli that it was a great compliment thus to be treated by a despondent prima donna. But he could not see it, and he calculated that the soprano's air, with the orchestral strains introducing it, would keep him in what he considered an ignominious position for something like ten minutes. It was absolutely necessary to promise Ravelli that his mortal remains should be removed from the stage to some quieter resting-place by six corpse bearers, the number on which he had set his heart; and he was honoured, if I remember rightly, with the funeral he had stipulated for at the last rehearsal. Baron Orczy had protested against this arrangement; but I assured him that there was nothing else to be done, and that everything should take place according to book at the public representation.

On the night of performance Ravelli was, of course, left recumbent on the stage. He must have thought more than once, as he lay writhing with

shame and anger on the boards, of rising and rushing off. But he feared too much the laughter and derision of the public, and he had to remain passive while the orchestral introduction was being played, and while the prima donna's soliloquy was being sung. Many of us thought the strain would be too much for him, and that he would go raving mad. But when he found himself once more a free agent behind the scenes he stabbed no one, struck no one, and, strange to say, seemed perfectly quiet. The humiliation to which he had been subjected had somehow calmed him down.

If Ravelli was wild and passionate, Galassi, his associate, was a reasonable man whose presence of mind had possibly the effect of saving my theatre from being burned a second time. There was a good deal of fire in *Il Rinnegato*, and in one scene the green lights surrounding an apparition starting from a well caught some gauze, so that the well itself burst into flames, the result being such a blaze that but for Galassi's promptitude in dealing with it the conflagration might have proved fatal to the building.

While the baritone was smothering the fire with his cloak and with some canvas on which the grass was painted—at the same time trampling the burning embers under foot—a portion of the audience had taken alarm and was already hurrying to the doors. At this critical moment I could not but admire the calm air of dignity with which Baron

Orczy, who was conducting his work, continued to mark the time and to direct the performance generally as though nothing at all extraordinary were taking place. I feel sure that this determined attitude of the composer in the presence of what, for a few seconds, seemed likely to lead to a terrible calamity, had a considerable effect in allaying the general excitement. "How can there be danger," many must have asked themselves, "when that gentleman who is conducting the orchestra, and who is so much nearer the supposed fire than we are, does not evince the least alarm?"

Towards the close of this season, negotiations were again opened by the Messrs. Gye towards purchasing my lease, goodwill, and interest, together with a certain portion of my costumes and scenery, with a view to an operatic monopoly. Ultimately terms were arranged, and an agreement concluded, which was not to come into force until the shares of the projected Company had been taken up; and it was only in August, 1882, that I was notified that sufficient shares had been placed to justify the Company starting, and my agreement coming into force. In the meantime I had been left to sustain the burden of the current expenses, rates, taxes, etc., of my own theatre, until the transfer could be made. The arrangement entered into was that I should have so much cash, and so many shares, together with an engagement for a period of three years, at a salary of £1,000 per annum, besides 50 per

cent. of the profits made in America, where I was to have sole control of the business.

In the early part of October, 1881, I started with my party for New York. The season opened on October 17th, with a performance of *Lohengrin* by Campanini, Galassi, Novara, Anna de Belocca, and Minnie Hauk, which gave great satisfaction. This was followed by a performance of *Carmen*, in which Minnie Hauk, Campanini, Del Puente, and Valleria resumed their original parts.

A few days prior to the sailing of the Company for America I visited Paris, where I heard a young vocalist, Mdlle. Vachot, sing; and at once negotiated with her for an engagement. She did not like the idea of crossing the ocean; but she was overruled by her father, a small farmer at Varreds.

Being in a hurry to conclude the engagement I called upon her the next day, with a contract in my pocket, when the servant informed me that she and her father had gone to Varreds to consult some relatives. On learning the name of the place I went to the station, and there heard the manager of the Grand Opera asking the ticket-seller how to get to Varreds. Luckily, he decided not to take that train. Thereupon I entered it; though being desperately hungry I was sorely tempted to lunch before doing so.

The nearest place on the railroad was Meaux. I got there in a pelting rain-storm to find that I had

to travel nine miles across country to Varreds. I managed to get a trap, but we had not gone more than half way before one of the traces broke, which, after some delay, I got repaired.

Finally I reached a clump of mud hovels; and this, I was told, was Varreds. I asked a cowboy whom I met if he had seen Mdlle. Vachot. He replied that he did not know her. He had seen two strangers, a lady and a gentleman, walking towards the "hotel," which I found to be a mud hut, with accommodation for men, women, and chickens, more especially the latter, which were walking all over the parlour floor. Nothing was known at this hotel, except that two strangers who had recently arrived, after leaving a bundle of shawls, had been seen going towards the cemetery.

On arriving at the cemetery I found the gate locked. I then went to the curé, who said he knew nothing of Mdlle. Vachot. Finally I met a blacksmith who knew her, and he pointed out where she was. I found her at table with six or seven country cousins. As I was hungry, I was glad to take pot-luck with them.

With some difficulty I afterwards got my contract signed, and started back for Paris. On my way to Meaux Station I met the manager of the Grand Opera driving over towards Varreds.

I afterwards secured a tenor of the name of Prévost, who had a phenomenal voice, and was then singing with success at the Théâtre du Château

d'Eau. He seemed especially adapted to the rôle of "Arnold" in *William Tell*. After signing with him I left for Italy, where I ordered new and magnificent costumes, including enough for an extra chorus of 90 male voices which I afterwards employed for the Gathering of the Cantons in Rossini's masterpiece.

From there I went to Parma, where the eminent *scenografo* of the theatre, with some persuasion, undertook to paint the scenery, which on its arrival in New York was pronounced by all connoisseurs simply superb.

About this time the director of the Leipsic State Theatre proposed the production of Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen* at Her Majesty's Theatre, with a very powerful cast of characters and a magnificent orchestra under the direction of Richter, the great master himself to superintend personally its production. But of this "more anon."

Mlle. Vachot duly appeared in the early part of November as "Rosina" in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. The house was crowded in every part, and Vachot was found to have a charming personality, a beautiful voice with a good method, together with no little dramatic talent. She was warmly received for her pretty appearance, and heartily applauded at frequent intervals for her delightful singing. From a good beginning she went on to a gratifying success, fairly establishing herself before the evening was over in the favour of her new public.

Things were progressing favourably when about this time Mdme. Adelina Patti arrived in New York on a speculation of her own, after an absence of some 22 years. A great deal of excitement was thereby created, and as Mdme. Patti's concerts were to take place within three doors of the Academy of Music, I began to fear as to the results of my season then progressing. Mdme. Patti's visit, however, turned out to be a most ill-advised one. Her concerts had not been properly announced, and she came with a very weak Company, believing that the magical name of Patti would alone crowd the hall. Her first concert realized scarcely 3,000 dollars, whilst the second dropped down to 1,000 only. Few people went to see her, and she at once understood what a mistake had been made. The charge, moreover, she demanded was ten dollars per seat ! The public, therefore, universally agreed to stay away. The paltry receipts of the second concert proved conclusively to Patti's manager, and to herself as well, that something had to be done to lift the sinking enterprise.

I may mention that I gave a gentle hint to Patti that her removal to the Academy would be most desirable by sending her a bouquet which cost some £30, with these words on it: "To Adelina Patti, Queen of the Lyric Stage." Two days afterwards I called to see *la Diva* at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and after some negotiation was on the point of concluding arrangements which would have been a

fortune to me as well as to Mdme. Patti herself, when at this critical moment Mr. Abbey came between us, offering her a concert tour in which, beyond receiving a fixed salary, she was to participate in his profits.

Abbey's admirable handling of Bernhardt being fresh in everyone's recollection, Patti had no reason to suppose that he would fail in her case to obtain similar results.

During my season at the Academy the production of Rossini's *chef d'œuvre*, *Guillaume Tell*, made a prodigious success, and crowded the theatre nightly. The tenor Prévost possessed the voice of exceptional quality necessary for the difficult rôle of "Arnoldo." Signor Galassi's "Tell" was a noble impersonation, marked by great dignity of action, and sung in the broad and grand style of which he is so complete a master; whilst the part of "Mathilde" was undertaken with success by Mdle. Dotti, who displayed remarkable ability.

Shortly afterwards I reproduced Verdi's *Aida*, for which I discovered a most capable soprano in the person of Mdle. Paolina Rossini, whose success went on increasing nightly; and who later on appeared in the difficult rôle of "Valentina" in *Les Huguenots*, at once taking a firm hold on the public.

We were now approaching the second great Cincinnati Opera Festival. I will, therefore, take the reader once more with me to that city.

The Opera Festival of 1882 opened on February 13th with immense success by a grand performance of Meyerbeer's *Huguenots*, the audience, an immense and distinguished gathering, numbering over 5,000 persons, the representatives of the wealth, the beauty, and the culture of the city.

As early as six o'clock people began to assemble outside the Music Hall, the scene of so many previous triumphs, and long before the commencement of the opera every seat was occupied, and every available inch of standing room likewise.

At a quarter to eight the opera began, a band composed of 150 selected professors occupying the orchestra under the veteran Arditi. The opera was a signal success, and went smoothly throughout; the grand "*Bénédiction des Poignards*" being executed marvellously by a chorus composed of 400 trained voices. The acoustic properties of the hall were simply perfect. Even in the extreme rear of the gallery, from where the artists on the stage appeared the size of Liliputians, the softest tones could be distinctly heard.

At the close of the performance, however, an unfortunate accident occurred, which deprived me of my prima donna for the remainder of my tour.

Just as the curtain fell, when "*Marcel*," "*Raoul*," and "*Valentine*" were shot by the Catholic Guards, the guns were pointed too near Mdlle. Rossini, who got touched in the face, and was further hurt whilst falling. She had, therefore, to be carried home.

I omitted to tell the reader that some weeks before I had succeeded in engaging Mdme. Patti to take part in this Festival, for which I paid her £1,600 a night, being the largest amount this invaluable lady has ever received in the shape of salary.

She was announced to appear on the second evening of the festival in a concert, followed by the fourth act of *Il Trovatore*. On arriving home, flushed with the success of the opening night, but deeply concerned about Mdlle. Rossini, whom I had just left, I received a letter from Mdme. Patti's agent, informing me that she was suffering from a severe cold, so that it was feared she would be unable to appear the following evening.

I at once sought Colonel Nichols, and informed him of this, desiring him kindly to accompany me to Mdme. Patti's with the leading physician of the city, who found the unwelcome tidings to be perfectly true. No alternative was left but to issue an explicit announcement to the public, postponing Mdme. Patti's appearance until the following Thursday afternoon at two o'clock. I therefore substituted the opera *Faust* the following evening, refunding their money to purchasers, or exchanging their tickets for the night on which Mdme. Patti was to appear. This, of course, needed a great deal of care and attention, and occupied me the greater portion of the night on account of the vast number of tickets to be provided for in the exchanges. I

am happy to say that there was no confusion; and the public eventually became satisfied with the arrangement made.

On the Wednesday afternoon the opera of *Carmen* was given, with Campanini, Del Puente, Dotti, and Minnie Hauk in the principal characters. In the evening *Fidelio* was produced with a powerful cast, and with 300 extra voices added for the celebrated Chorus of Prisoners, the receipts reaching their maximum on that occasion.

Mdme. Patti, unfortunately, made but slow progress towards recovery, and it was consequently decided to further postpone her appearance until the following Saturday night, it being again necessary to inform the public as to the cause.

Various conflicting rumours at once got into circulation as to the Patti trouble. After it had been announced that the capricious *Diva* could not sing many refused flatly to believe in the reason assigned, namely, that she had a sore throat. Others declared that Patti was a little stubborn, self-willed person, and had done this expressly "to spite Mapleson." Inquiries were set about in all directions.

Newspapers sent their reporters hundreds of miles to discover the state of Patti's health before she had quitted Detroit to come on to the Festival. Malicious people even went so far as to say that Patti, like Rip Van Winkle, was fond of "schnapps," on the insufficient ground that, prior to starting,

she had purchased a bottle of Mumm's "extra dry." Even this turned out to be a mistake, for, in reply to an inquiry made, a special despatch was received from Detroit by the *Cincinnati Gazette*, stating that "the bills of Patti at the Detroit Hotel show that during her entire stay in that city only two quarts of wine were consumed, and the hotel waiters state they think Nicolini drank the most of it. Further, the landlord stated that none of the party were noticeably intoxicated during their stay in his hotel, showing there could be no truth whatever in the statement that Patti was under the influence of liquor."

An evening paper published the following:—"The explanation that Patti caught cold whilst driving in this city is strengthened by the fact that she at least had a good opportunity for doing so, as she was driving most of the time during the previous day. On our reporter inquiring at the stables, he ascertained that her carriage bill for her drive amounted to 55 dollars." Dr. J. D. Buck, who attended her, informed the newspaper reporter that "Mdme. Patti was undoubtedly ill of a cold, but she was rapidly improving."

Meanwhile Dr. F. Forchheimer, physician to the College of Music, was also sent to inspect the larynx of the prima donna, and he confirmed what the previous doctor had said.

The ticket speculators, however, lost nothing by the affair, the city being very famous for *matinée*

performances, and as the ladies came forward in great numbers at five dollars apiece for the purpose of showing their new toilettes, very few returned after once entering the doors. Each of the audiences for *Carmen* and *Fidelio* numbered 8,000 people.

On Friday evening I produced Mozart's *Magic Flute*; and on Saturday a magnificent representation with complete scenic effects was given of *William Tell*, where again my increased chorus of 400 did very effective work, the voices coming out with full freshness and vigour. So good a chorus had never been heard on the operatic stage before. The orchestra, too, particularly distinguished itself. The overture, which musically embodies the whole opera, was given with such precision, correctness of *tempo*, and delicacy of colour that it called forth at once an encore.

On the Saturday morning a grand performance of *Lohengrin* was given, and in the evening Mdme. Patti was enabled to appear, the first part being devoted to a concert, while the second was composed of the fourth act of *Trovatore*.

As the success of the Festival kept on increasing we resolved to give an extra performance, for which purpose an engagement was entered into with Mdme. Patti for the following Monday, when she appeared as "Margherita" in *Faust*.

I afterwards visited Detroit, Buffalo, Cleveland, Syracuse, and Albany, returning to New York for the usual spring season, and there performing

Fidelio, Huguenots, Lohengrin, Carmen, William Tell, and Faust.

In the meanwhile I had put in rehearsal Meyerbeer's *Africaine*, which was placed on the stage at considerable expense, all the costumes, scenery, dresses, and armour being entirely new, and the stage being occupied by some 400 persons. The gorgeous revival of *L'Africaine* proved an extraordinary success. The audience fairly packed the large house nightly, the fine spectacle presented in the third and fourth acts causing great enthusiasm. Miss Hauk undertook the part of "Selika," and was particularly successful from a dramatic point of view, whilst Signor Galassi and Campanini found great opportunities for the display of their vocal abilities. The great ship scene of the third act created a perfect furore. So anxious was I that the acting of the Indians on boarding the ship should create a sensation, that I went to Union Square and from the various agencies engaged some 12 or 15 actors, who were then out of employment, and whose make-up with the tattoo marks and their realistic fighting made such an impression that on the conclusion of the scene the curtain had to be raised.

The grand march, too, in the fourth act created a sensation, equally with the magnificent spectacle and the gorgeous palanquin in which "Selika" enters accompanied by "Nelusko." I had requested Bradwell to design for me a full-sized elephant with a palanquin on its back, in which

people were seated, the interior of the elephant being occupied and kept firm by two stalwart policemen.

The scenery was of the most gorgeous description, specially painted for me by Magnani, who surpassed even his previous efforts. *L'Africaine* was repeated for five or six consecutive nights to crowded houses.

On one occasion we had to perform *L'Africaine* on consecutive nights in New York and Philadelphia, which entailed the removal of the whole of the scenery and dresses, likewise the transport of the whole of the supernumeraries, ballet, etc., numbering altogether 400 persons; and we had, moreover, to return the same evening after the performance to New York, in which city the work was to be repeated the following night.

The supernumeraries, with their blackened faces, and the Indians with their tattoo marks, caused a great sensation at the railway station on the return journey, as there was no time to think of washing them. We only reached New York the next morning at six o'clock, when again the early morning public were startled by the arrival of these sable gentry under a blazing sun.

We remained in New York for further representations, when I revived Verdi's *Ernani*, *Don Giovanni*, *Huguenots*, etc.

CHAPTER XVIII.

I ENGAGE PATTI—MY MILITARY EXPERIENCE—INFLUENCING
ELECTORS—OPERATIC JOINT STOCK COMPANY—OBJEC-
TIONS TO ENGLISH MONOPOLY—PATTI IN NEW YORK.

ABOUT this time I set to work for the purpose of engaging Adelina Patti for my ensuing season, and sent a letter to all the 200 stockholders of the Academy (who occupied free seats) to know what amount they would contribute towards the accomplishment of my object. Mr. Pierre Lorillard wrote to me that in case I should be short he would donate 1,000 dollars beyond the amount he then contributed should Patti sing at the Academy the next winter. I replied that I simply required each stockholder to contribute three dollars a seat for the Patti nights in order to aid me in carrying out this much-desired engagement.

I regret to say that many of the stockholders sent me no response whatever. Others destroyed the value of their consent by adding that it was only to

be given if all the other shareholders agreed to do the same.

Another great difficulty presented itself. I was called upon to deposit no less than £11,000 at Belmont's bank as caution money on the signing of the contract. This difficulty I ultimately got over through the kindness of August Belmont, who guaranteed Mdme. Patti's deposit, I at the same time assigning to Mr. Belmont the whole of my subscriptions. The agreement with Mdme. Patti was, therefore, duly signed.

The conclusion of this contract made a great sensation. When it became known that Mdme. Patti was to return the following season, numbers of applications were made for subscriptions, although it was six months before the opening.

About this time the building of the new Metropolitan Opera-house had been resumed in earnest, in order that it might be completed by the following spring.

The season shortly afterwards closed with the benefits of the various singers, I taking the last night, when I gave acts of four different operas, namely, *Faust*, *Daughter of the Regiment*, *Ruy Blas*, and *Africaine*, with a new ballet.

Having secured Mdme. Patti for the ensuing season, I endeavoured to effect an engagement also with Mdme. Gerster, who was then in New York, having returned from New Orleans, and being now on her way to England. I only succeeded, however,

in securing her services for the following morning, when an early *matinée* had to be given prior to the departure of the Company for Europe in the afternoon, the receipts on that occasion reaching no less than 9,000 dollars.

This year the Americans paid me the compliment of making me an honorary member of the 22nd Regiment, with rank corresponding to my own actual rank in the English volunteers. But beyond attending a couple of balls and some competition drills in the uniform of the regiment I had never time enough to profit by the privileges extended to me in so friendly a manner.

I must not forget among my volunteering remiscences a rather dramatic incident which occurred at Her Majesty's Theatre in the year 1860, when I had just joined the Honorable Artillery Company, and, as yet but little instructed in the mysteries of drill, was anxious to qualify myself as soon as possible for admission into line. With this view I spent every spare moment in practice, sometimes with the Scots Guards at St. George's Barracks, Trafalgar Square, and often in the evening, when some operatic representation was actually going on, at Her Majesty's Theatre, where I utilized the services of the guard of honour in attendance. The first time I carried out what had struck me as rather a happy idea I was putting the squad of guardsmen through the bayonet exercise in the Ballet practice room. I had just given the orders, "Advance, advance, point!"

when the door opened, and Lewis, the treasurer, appeared, bearing in his hand a bag which held the receipts of the evening. The word "point!" brought the bayonets of the guardsmen almost into contact with the breast of the startled official, who, uttering a shriek and dropping the money-bags, turned and fled.

So scared was he that not until some time afterwards did he quite recover himself. Had he fancied in his terror that the guard had suddenly invaded the theatre and prepared an ambuscade in order to rob the treasurer of the night's receipts? He could give no explanation on the subject. The sight of the red-coats, the authoritative cry of "Point!" and the rapid presentation of the bayonets, which all but pierced him, had the effect of depriving him for a time of his wits. No other account could poor Lewis give of the matter.

In these degenerate times it is considered enough at one of the Royal Theatres to station outside during the performance a sergeant's guard; and Mr. Augustus Harris is modest enough to consider a corporal's guard sufficient. In former days, however, Her Majesty's Theatre was almost always during a performance under the care of a captain's guard, the officers being provided for inside, where the captain, the lieutenant, and the ensign occupied stalls one, two, and three, specially reserved for them.

Three other stalls used, at this time, to be re-

served for the Captain of the Body-Guard, the Exon in Waiting, and the Clerk of the Cheque.

To show that my military studies and military labours of the last twenty-eight years have not been altogether in vain, I may here append a few letters from various commanding officers and adjutants with whom I have at various times done duty.

During my English provincial tours I have for many years, thanks to the kindness of H.R.H. the Commander-in-Chief, been enabled to do duty with a number of different regular regiments, whose officers have done me, moreover, the honour of making me free of their mess. Sometimes, too, the Colonel of the regiment has been good enough to place his troops under my command. I have the pleasantest recollections of having, in the course of my various provincial tours, worked and dined with the officers of, I can scarcely say how many regiments. Here are some of the letters which, on my taking leave, I received from the commanding officers or adjutants of those corps:—

“Richmond Barracks, Dublin,

“Dec. 14, 1869.

“I certify that Lieutenant-Colonel Mapleson, 6th Tower Hamlets Rifles, has drilled regularly under my supervision from the 4th of September, 1869, until the 9th of October, 1869. During this period he went regularly through company drill, and for the last fortnight took command of the Battalion; he

on joining being well up to his work and thoroughly acquainted with the theory of drill. On leaving I considered him well qualified to take command of a regiment in the field. He took the greatest interest in his work, and went in for mastering the minutiae of drill with great perseverance.

“C. J. BURNETT,

“Captain and Adjutant 2/15 Regiment.”

“Salford Barracks, Manchester,

“May 6, 1870.

“I hereby testify to the capabilities of Lieutenant-Colonel Mapleson in drill during the time I had command of the 100th Regiment at Manchester. He drilled the Battalion several times, and from the report of the Adjutant I have no hesitation in stating that few officers are superior to him in the knowledge of battalion manœuvres.

“H. COOKE,

“Major Commanding 100th Regiment.”

“Gallowgate Barracks, Glasgow,

“May 26, 1870.

“I certify that Colonel J. H. Mapleson, Honble. Artillery Company, was drilling with the 2nd Battalion 5th Fusiliers, then under my command, and that he showed considerable proficiency in company and battalion drill.

“GEORGE CARDEN,

“Major 2nd Battalion 5th Fusiliers.”

“Junior United Service Club,

“November 1, 1871.

“I have much pleasure in testifying as to Colonel Mapleson's thorough knowledge of the ‘Field Exercise Book,’ etc., etc., and I feel convinced from what I saw of him whilst attached to my regiment that he could handle it under any circumstances.

“J. CLOWES HINDS,

“Major 40th Regiment.”

“Beggars' Bush Barracks, Dublin,

“January 13, 1871.

“Lieutenant-Colonel Mapleson drilled with the 1st Battalion Scots Fusilier Guards during the autumn of 1870. He was thoroughly up in company and battalion drill, more especially the latter, and is perfectly able to drill the Battalion.

“J. W. WAIKER,

“Captain and Adjutant

“1st Battalion Scots Fusilier Guards.”

“Glasgow, October 30, 1871.

“Lieutenant-Colonel Mapleson has during the last month frequently attended the parades of my regiment. He has both taken command of a company at battalion drill and has also manœuvred the Battalion himself, in both situations, showing a thorough knowledge of the Infantry Field Exercise.

“J. C. RATTRAY,

“Colonel Commanding 90th Light Infantry.”

“Edinburgh Castle,

“May 21, 1873.

“Certified that Colonel James H. Mapleson was attached to the 93rd Highlanders for drill. I consider him able to drill a squad, company, or battalion according to the Field Exercise, and fully impart instruction therein.

“FITZROY MACPHERSON,

“Adjutant 93rd Sutherland Highlanders.”

“Infantry Barracks, Windsor,

“July 7, 1873.

“This is to certify that Colonel Mapleson was attached for drill to the 1st Battalion Scots Guards during the winter months; that he is thoroughly acquainted with battalion drill, and perfectly competent to drill the Battalion either singly or in brigade.

“J. W. WALKER,

“Captain and Adjutant 1st Battalion Scots Guards.”

“Edinburgh Castle, N.B.,

“April 10, 1875.

“I certify that during the stay of Colonel Mapleson at Edinburgh he attended regularly all parades of the 90th Light Infantry, and manifested thorough knowledge of company and battalion drill. He has a good ‘word of command,’ and nothing could

exceed his zeal for military information, which he is fully in possession of.

“H. W. PALMER,
“Major Commanding 90th Light Infantry.”

“Wellington Barracks,
“January 10, 1874.

“We certify that Lieutenant-Colonel Mapleson, of the Tower Hamlets Rifle Brigade, is conversant with the drill of a company and of a battalion, and able to give instruction in the same.

“That he can command a battalion in brigade.

“That he is competent to superintend instruction in aiming and position drill, and to superintend blank firing and ball practice.

“That he is acquainted with the proper mode of route marching and the duties of guards.

“Also that he can ride.

“Also that he is acquainted with the mode of posting picquets and their sentries and the duties of orderly officer.

“L. E. PHILLIPS,
“Colonel 2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards.

“E. ANTROBUS,
“Captain and Adjutant 2nd Battalion Grenadier
Guards.

“Approved

“EDWARD SAXE WEIMAR,
“Major-General Commanding Home District.”

Among my experiences of exercise and drill I remember an incident in connection with a Scottish regiment which, though I cannot very well narrate it in minute detail, I can say enough to make the whole story intelligible to those who have worn a kilt. At Edinburgh, in 1873, the 93rd Highlanders were one morning placed under my orders in the Queen's Park by the Commanding Officer, at that time Colonel Burroughs. The regiment was on the slope of a hill looking downwards. I gave the word to fire a volley at a distance of 500 yards, and my military readers are aware that at a distance beyond 200 yards the position for firing is the kneeling one.

A great number of persons were looking on. Suddenly an adjutant rode up to me, and pointing to the crowd exclaimed —

“For heaven's sake give the word, ‘As you were!’”

Friends have often asked me how, occupied, absorbed, distracted as I must have been by the affairs of a great operative establishment, I could nevertheless find time, leisure, and even strong inclination for military pursuits. The simple explanation is that I needed diversion from my ordinary labours, and that I found this in the active duties of a volunteer officer. Frequently at the end of a long rehearsal I have, without finding time to dine, had to put on my uniform, get on horseback, and hurry to take the command of my regiment in the Regent's

or in Hyde Park. The entire change of occupation was, I am convinced, the best possible relaxation I could have. I never could have recruited my energies by simple idleness, which, besides being in my case intolerable, is apt to lead one into scrapes.

Many years ago, at the beginning of the volunteer movement, at which time I was still associated with Mr E. T. Smith, I qualified myself for the duties of sergeant, and used to receive half-a-guinea a time from the corps for drilling recruits, who came to us, naturally under the circumstances, in the rawest condition. My reflection (not, perhaps, a particularly new one) as to the perils of idleness was forcibly illustrated when, a short time afterwards, I found myself at Walton-on-the-Naze doing duty with a battery. Anything more hopelessly dull than that place when drill was once at an end, can scarcely be imagined. At last I could stand it no longer, and was obliged to devise some means of diversion, which if culpable was, I hope, original.

The people of the place told me that, though Walton was dull and desolate, there were plenty of farmers in the neighbourhood who had buxom wives and pretty daughters, and that when anything really worth seeing was going on whole families would flock in, and render the place quite lively with their presence.

What would attract them? I put the question to myself as an impresario just beginning his career, but already accustomed to consider such questions.

Our artillery drill was evidently not enough. The great sensation of the moment with the British public was Blondin and his tight-rope performances.

Would Blondin fetch them? I asked myself; and, Blondin himself being out of the question, would public announcements to the effect that Blondin would appear on a certain day have the desired result?

A day or two afterwards the walls of Walton-on-the-Naze as well as Colchester were covered with placards setting forth that on a fixed day Blondin would appear and walk on the tight-rope from the end of the pier to the top of the hotel in which we were staying.

On the day appointed the sun shone brightly, and long before the time at which Blondin was expected an army of holiday folks from the surrounding country came in with as many pretty girls as one could wish to see in the somewhat similar scene of the "statute fair" in the opera of *Martha*.

There was no room for the carts in the stables of the place, and they had to be packed close together on the beach.

The regimental band played on the pier, and the holiday folk had, I am sure, an agreeable time. Some disappointment may have been caused when telegrams in *fac-simile* were posted on the walls with the information that Blondin from indisposition would be unable to appear. But this was atoned?

for by an announcement that in lieu of the tight-rope performance there would be a grand display of fireworks; and the pyrotechnics, which the organizers of the hoax paid for, went off most brilliantly.

At one time, moreover, I used to find solace from my managerial cares in the pursuit of politics, and, with or without justification, I nourish the hope that I did something towards securing the return of Mr. W. H. Smith for Westminster. I was an active member of his committee, both in connection with the elections which went against him and the subsequent one which brought him triumphantly in. After his second failure I remember the late Mr. Lionel Lawson saying to me —

“The thing is impossible; I would not mind giving you a written promise to pay you £10,000 if ever he gets in.”

Lists were at that time in the hands of the registration committees, showing on which side each elector gave his vote. It seemed useless to interfere with those who were marked “L,” as voting firmly on the Liberal side. But among the Westminster shop-keepers there were numbers who were marked “LC,” who apparently did not care on which side they voted, and who generally divided their vote between a Liberal and a Conservative candidate. With these undecided men there was evidently something to be done; and I gave them to understand that, having strong Conservative sympathies, I should feel it my duty to place on my free

list those of the undecided who could bring themselves to support that side.

As the ballot system had just been introduced when Mr. W. H. Smith was for the first time returned, I cannot, of course, say to what extent my advocacy and aid may have benefited him. But I hope, as before observed, that I did something towards securing his presence in Parliament.

On my arrival in London I was notified that the Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden, Limited, had not yet been floated. But this result was daily expected. I was precluded then from taking further steps towards opening my London season of 1882, fearing that the Company might be floated just as I started, in which case I should have to close up again.

In the meantime, fire insurances, poor rates, and taxes generally kept on accumulating, and although I notified that I was ready to hand over possession of the theatre, I still could get no reply. The consequence was that I had to pay all sorts of arrears whilst an action for ejectment was brought against me for having been a few days late in paying the fire insurance. My landlord, in order to keep his superior lease straight with the Woods and Forests, had also paid it, so that the Company received the money twice over. Considerable battles hereupon commenced in the law courts with a view of ejecting me from my theatre, and it was not till late in the season that

the long-expected notification came that the Company had been floated.

The consideration I was to receive consisted of a payment of £2,500 in cash and 1,000 fully paid up £10 shares in the new Company. I need hardly inform the reader that I never saw one of the shares, and could never get them ; whilst all the cash that I received was consumed in paying off the arrears of ground rent of Her Majesty's Theatre, insurance, etc., whilst I was waiting for the Company to be floated.

The main object of the Gyes and of the new Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden, Limited, was to obtain possession of the new Metropolitan Operahouse, New York, which was then approaching completion. By the terms of my agreement with the Academy of Music in New York I was prohibited from parting with or assigning my interest or any part thereof in that building during the remaining portion of my tenancy, which still had two years to run. The agreement in reference to my services for the next season at the Academy had to be drawn so as to make it appear that I had not in any way parted with my interest or any portion thereof ; although by another agreement it was stipulated that I ran no pecuniary risks whatever in connection with the approaching season, simply receiving my personal expenses, my salary of £1,000 a year, and my 50 per cent. of the profits, while retaining, as hitherto, the sole direction of the whole concern.

On starting from Europe, the Royal Italian Opera Company, Limited, gave me a financial secretary to accompany me; and I was also assisted by Commander Gye as treasurer. I formed, as I considered, a most brilliant Company, which included Mdme. Adelina Patti, Mdlle. Savio, a new singer whom I had heard in Italy, Mdlle. Rossini, Mdlle. Minnie Hauk, Mdme. Fursch-Madi, Mdlle. Dotti, Mdlle. Valleria, Mdlle. Zagury, Mdme. Scalchi, Signori Mierzwinski, Ravelli, Campanini, Nicolini, Galassi, Del Puente, and Durat, a Parisian baritone of some note. I augmented the strength of the chorus, and when on the point of publishing my prospectus I found that the general manager in London had added a Mdlle. Berghi, without my knowledge, who on her appearance later on made probably the greatest *fiasco* ever known in America. He also, however, added his wife, Mdme. Albani, whose brilliant talents added lustre to the season. We began, therefore, in grand style, and had an enormous subscription.

The opera troupe arrived in New York early in October, and was met in the usual way by steamers and bands of music up the bay. These accompanied us to the wharf, where the party landed amidst great cheering.

Whilst on board I organized a grand opera concert, in which the whole of the principal singers and chorus took part, under the direction of Arditi, in aid of the Liverpool Sailors' Orphanage. The

saloon was elegantly decorated for the occasion, and, without exception, every passenger aided the scheme by attendance and contributions. I directed the musical arrangements, whilst the prince of American orators, the Hon. Daniel Dogherty, presided. Over £50 was realized for the charity.

It was now announced by the Royal Italian Opera Company, Limited, that on the completion of the new Metropolitan Opera-house, which Gye felt so sure of obtaining, the Academy would be closed, so that a monopoly of Italian Opera would thus be established in New York.

The papers took the idea up warmly, but in a hostile spirit; the *Herald* declaring in a leading article that if the Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden, Limited, of London, ever expected to monopolize opera in America it was very much mistaken. The people in America, it stated, would heartily encourage them in all efforts to establish and maintain a first-class Opera in New York; but when they talked of repeating the London proceeding by closing up either one of the existing Operahouses for the purpose of monopolizing the business, they might as well understand that they were proposing a scheme which the American public would readily defeat. It was contended that New York was large enough for two Italian Operahouses, and, if the performances in both were meritorious, both would be well supported.

Of course all the attention of the public was

concentrated on the expected arrival of Patti, which in due course took place. There was the usual crowd on the wharf all night awaiting the ship's arrival. I had left orders for a telegram to be sent to me as soon as the vessel passed Fire Island in order that I might be in time to dress and go down to one of the specially chartered steamers with Signor Franchi, Patti's agent, Commander Herbert Gye, and a party of artists and reporters, accompanied by military bands, fireworks, etc. The *Servia* was out in the middle of the stream, and we steamed up alongside, when we saw Patti, who had been up since half-past four in the morning, in feverish anxiety to reach *terra firma*.

Our band struck up "God Save the Queen" and everyone bared his head; the Englishmen partly from traditional reverence, but most of those present from admiration of the lyric queen who had come for another reign to the delighted people of New York. Handshaking and greetings followed.

After we had got the Patti through the Custom House she was placed in a carriage and taken to the Windsor Hotel, the room being piled up with telegrams, cards, and bouquets. There was also a large set piece with the word "Welcome!" embroidered on it in roses. In the evening there was a midnight serenade in front of the Windsor Hotel, and ultimately *la Diva* had to appear at the window, when orchestra and chorus, who were outside, performed the grand prayer from *I Lombardi*. After

three hearty cheers for Adelina Patti people went home, and she was left in peace.

Mdme. Patti made her *début* a few days afterwards as "Lucia di Lammermoor," followed by the *Traviata*, etc. To describe in detail her success would be to repeat an oft-told tale.

Amongst the numberless inquiries at the box-office several were made as to how long Mdme. Patti remained on the stage in each of the different operas; and the newspapers busied themselves as to the number of notes she sang in each particular work; larger demands for seats being made on those evenings when she sang more notes. *La Traviata* generally carried off the palm, perhaps because one journal had calculated the interest of the money accruing on her diamonds, whilst she was singing in that work.

A party of amateurs would buy a ticket between them, each one taking 20 minutes of the ticket and returning with the pass-out check to the next. Lots were drawn to decide who was to go in first; and in the event of anyone overstaying his 20 minutes he had to pay for the whole ticket; correctness of time being the essence of the arrangement.

CHAPTER XIX.

NON-ARRIVAL OF SCALCHI—GENERAL INDISPOSITION—KING
KULAKAUA ENNOBLES PATTI—RAVELLI CONSULTS HIS
DOG—THE COMPANY VACCINATED—PATTI EATEN BY
MICE—ARRIVAL OF ALBANI—CINCINNATI OPERA
FESTIVAL OF '83—FREEDOM OF THE CITY.

I was getting very anxious about the arrival of Scalchi, who had never yet appeared in New York, and who had lately been singing in Rio Janiero and at Buenos Ayres. It was not until the 20th November that I received notice of the sighting of her ship, the *Plato*, from Rio Janeiro, which at length arrived on the 24th, after a tempestuous voyage of twenty-two days. The vessel had been laden with coffee, hundreds of boxes of which had been thrown overboard to lighten it. Provisions running short, the passengers had mostly to live on biscuit and coffee, so that Mdme. Scalchi on her arrival was in a very feeble state; and in lieu of going down to the Academy to rehearsal, as I proposed, took to her bed and remained there for nearly a month. I was almost daily in attendance upon her.

Early in December I was within a very close shave of closing the theatre. The opera announced for the evening in question was *William Tell*. At about four o'clock I received a doctor's certificate from Mdle. Dotti, who performed the principal female character, notifying me that she had been attacked with diphtheria. I therefore had to set about to find a substitute, having decided to give the opera anyhow. Shortly after a notification came from Mierzwinski, the tenor, who was also indisposed, though after a deal of trouble he promised to go on and do his best.

I was, however, compelled to change the opera to *Lucia di Lammermoor*, as the lady who had undertaken to replace the prima donna in *William Tell* was in such a nervous state. There was no time for a rehearsal; I therefore decided to give *Lucia* instead. On the notice being sent to Mdle. Laura Zagury, the soprano, she informed me that although *Lucia* was in the *répertoire* she furnished me on her engagement she had never sung that rôle. The opera therefore had to be changed to *Aida*. Orders had just been given to the various departments as to the scenery, dresses, music, etc., when the news came that Mdle. Rossini, whom I had counted upon for the principal part, was lying ill at her house in Fifth Avenue.

I now changed the opera to *Rigoletto*; but Mdme. Zagury was not ready with the part of "Gilda," and absolutely refused to appear. *Les Huguenots*

was next announced, it being now half-past five. Everything was set in motion for the production of that opera, when Mdme. Fursch-Madi declared her inability to assume the part of the heroine, as she had taken some medicine, believing that her services would not be required until the early part of the following week. Thereupon an attack was made on Mdme. Savio, who, however, regretted that she was unable to appear as "Valentine."

Nothing was left but to try *La Favorita*; but Signor Ravelli, who had just finished a *Carmen* rehearsal, declared it would be utterly impossible for him to sing the rôle of "Fernando." Then Minnie Hauk was sought for; but she was saving herself for her appearance in Brooklyn on the morrow, and distinctly declined.

I now took a decision either to perform *La Favorita*, or to close up, as it was already 6.30 p.m. I at length persuaded Signor Clodio, one of the tenors, to assume the part of "Fernando." But a new difficulty arose, as, being a very portly gentleman, there were no costumes in the house to fit him. The tailors were then set to work, who promised to have the dress ready in time. At this juncture word came from Mdme. Galassi, who was to have taken the part of "Leonora," that she was in bed suffering, and that it would be impossible for her to appear. I immediately went off to Mdme. Galassi myself. She assured me of her willingness to do her best; but she had two large boils under her

right arm which caused her acute agony. At that moment she nearly swooned from the pain. To fetch Dr. Mott, our talented theatrical surgeon, was the work of a moment. We raised her up and the boils were lanced, which at once gave her relief, and I got her down to the theatre just at five minutes to eight. She had time to dress, as "*Leonora*" does not appear until the second act. The performance went off successfully; I had got out of another serious difficulty after changing the opera seven times.

In the midst of my trouble a deputation arrived from Kalakaua I., King of the Sandwich Islands, informing me that they were commanded by his Majesty the King of Hawaii to confer on Mdme. Patti the Royal Order of Kapirlani. They had the diploma and jewels with them, and they were accompanied by the King's Chamberlain. I had to entreat them to wait "*a moment*" while I got through my troubles. That moment must have been nearly two hours.

At length we all went off to Patti's hotel, when the Order was conferred upon her in the presence of some intimate friends. The Order consisted of a jewelled star, suspended by a red and white striped ribbon, accompanied by the following parchment document:—

"Kalakaua I., King of the Hawaiian Islands, to all who shall see these presents greeting, know that we have appointed and commissioned, and by these

presents we appoint and commission, Mdme. Patti to be a Knight Companion of our Royal Order of Kapirlani, to exercise and enjoy all the rights, pre-eminences, and privileges to the same of right appertaining, and to wear the insignia as by decree created.

“In testimony whereof we have caused these letters to be made patent, and the seal of the Order to be hereunto affixed.

“Given under our hand, at our palace at Honolulu, this 8th day of November, in the year of our Lord 1882.

“KALAKAUA REX.

“By the King, the Chancellor of the Royal Order of Kapirlani.

“(Signed) CHARLES H. JUDD.”

The season continued, and *Lohengrin*, *Africaine*, *Huguenots* and other important operas were produced. The unfortunate illness of Scalchi had long delayed me from producing *Semiramide*, which, however, was at length brought out on the 20th December, being the last night but two of the season. Never shall I forget the enthusiasm of the crowded and fashionable audience of that evening. Mdme. Patti's exquisite purity of intonation and her breadth of phrasing filled the large audience assembled with delight. At length Mdme. Scalchi appeared, and she at once proved herself an artist of extraordinary excellence, and a true dramatic singer, with a

contralto of unusual richness, volume, and compass. The enormous success achieved by Scalchi inspired *la Diva*, and it was generally pronounced that her singing on this occasion was the best she had ever given in America, being, indeed, the perfection of vocal art. The whole performance was beyond criticism.

For the morning of the following Saturday, the 23rd, I announced the opera of *Carmen*. This was to be the closing *matinée* of the regular winter season, and the announcement drew one of the largest assemblages of ladies, there being very few gentlemen, to the doors of the Academy.

It was about three-quarters of an hour before the opening of the doors when Ravelli sent word that he could not sing. It was then too late to change the opera. I therefore rushed off to his hotel, leaving word that the doors were on no account to be opened until I returned.

I found him in bed. Hearing me enter he slunk under the clothes, and I could not get him to answer my questions. I approached the bed to remove the sheets, when a dog sprang out at me, Ravelli's favourite dog Niagara.

"Laissez moi dormir!" muttered the sluggard, as he turned over on the other side.

"Get up," I exclaimed; "don't you understand that you are imperilling my enterprise by lying in bed and refusing to sing when there is nothing the matter with you?"

He told me that he was very tired, that he was quite out of sorts, that his voice was not in good order, and so on.

With the aid of his wife, I succeeded in making him get up. He dressed himself. Then taking him to the piano I tried his voice, and found that there was nothing whatever the matter with it. He could sing perfectly well.

Ravelli, however, for some minutes still hesitated. In his difficulty he determined to consult Niagara. Appealing to an animal whose superior intelligence he recognized, Ravelli said in the French language —

“ Est ce que ton maître doit chanter ? ”

The dog growled, and Ravelli interpreted this oracular response as an order not to sing. He tore his clothes off, sprang hurriedly into bed, and left me to my own resources.

In London I had raised poor Volpini almost from the dead to make him sing the part of *Faust*, when but for his services I should have had to close my theatre. I had induced George Bolton (of whom I knew nothing at the time, except that he had a tenor voice, and that I had nearly run over him in a cab) to undertake literally at a moment's notice the part of “Lionel” in *Martha*, of which he knew nothing until I coached him, except one air. But neither a Bolton nor a Volpini was now to be found, and thanks to my lazy, superstitious, dog-ridden tenor, I had to close my theatre and send away one of the most brilliant audiences that New York could produce.

I wrote a hurried notice which was put up in manuscript just as I had scribbled it down, to the effect that in consequence of Ravelli's refusing without explanation to sing, the theatre was closed for that morning.

The excitement outside was prodigious. Everyone, of course, said that it was through my fault the doors were shut.

"It is all that Mapleson," one charming lady was heard to exclaim. "Wouldn't I scratch his face if I had him here!"

Worst of all, the "scalpers" went off with the money they had received for tickets sold outside the theatre.

Let me here explain what "scalper" means. I am afraid that in America our excellent librarians who do so much for the support of the Opera would be called "scalpers;" a scalper meaning simply one who buys tickets at the theatre to sell them at an advance elsewhere. The ferocious name bestowed upon these gentry shows, however, that their dealings are not quite so honourable as those of our "booksellers." For when they had disposed of their tickets, and the performance changed, or the theatre by some accident closed, they would walk off without any thought of restoring the money they had received for tickets now unavailable. At times, too, I have caught them exhibiting a gallery diagram, and selling gallery places as orchestra stalls. They are now obliged, by a just law, to take out licenses,

and register their places of abode. Nor do managers allow any one of them to buy more than four tickets for each representation.

Meanwhile the New York fall season of 1882 finished up grandly with *Semiramide*, the receipts reaching 14,000 dollars, and the public mad with enthusiasm.

I afterwards started with the Company for Baltimore, where we opened with rather less than our usual success, on account of the small-pox which was raging all over the city. Very few notices were given of the opera in consequence of three and four columns a day being occupied with the crusade undertaken against the small-pox by Mayor White, who had telegraphed for a large number of vaccination physicians from various States, determined as he was to stamp out the disease.

The whole of the twenty wards of the city had been placed under properly constituted medical authorities, and there everyone had to be vaccinated, including the whole of my Company. Prima donnas had to be vaccinated on the legs, whilst ballet-girls were vaccinated on the arms; in fact the theatre at one time became quite a hospital.

However, we managed to get through our engagement with success, though Mdme. Patti remained over at Philadelphia, being afraid to enter the city of Baltimore.

The production of *L'Africaine*, which was new to Baltimore, was a marked success. On terminating

our engagement we went over to Philadelphia, where Patti made a splendid opening in *La Traviata*, the vast theatre being crowded from floor to ceiling.

The next night we produced *Aida*, the Directors of the Academy of Music having caused to be painted specially for the occasion some of the most gorgeous Egyptian scenery I have ever seen.

At five o'clock Mdme. Scalchi sent me word that she was very ill, and unable to sing. I thereupon went for the physician, whom I conducted forthwith to her hotel. On our arriving at the door of her apartment I saw a waiter going in with some lobsters, salad, and roast duck. I immediately asked for whom he was catering, and he replied: "Mdme. Scalchi." I waited a few minutes in order to give her time to begin operations on the duck and the lobsters; and she was recounting some amusing story which ended in loud laughter, when I took this as my cue for entering.

Mdme. Scalchi could no longer plead indisposition, and in due time she came to the theatre.

Aida was a great success. At two o'clock the following afternoon we performed *Lucia* with Adelina Patti to a house containing over 14,000 dollars. In the evening we gave *L'Africaine*, magnificently placed on the vast stage, to receipts not far inferior to those of the morning.

Prior to the close of our very successful engagement sad alarm was created all over the city by a report in some of the leading morning papers that

Mdme. Patti the preceding night had been devoured by mice. Several persons had already applied at the box office for the return of their money on the ground that *la Diva* had ceased to breathe.

On inquiry it turned out that Mdme. Patti had been bitten by a mouse on the left ear. I had better tell the story in the *Diva's* own words, as given to the reporter of the *Philadelphia Press*.

“ ‘So you were bitten by rats last evening?’ the reporter said.

“ ‘Oh, no, it was not so bad as that,’ replied Patti, laughing heartily as she recalled the adventure. ‘I hardly, however, like to mention it at all, for I am really so comfortable in this hotel. They do all they can to please me. When I went to bed last evening my maid turned the clothes over for me to get in, when out jumped six mice—a complete family, in fact; nice fat little fellows. I was not frightened; at least, I was only astonished. I took my bon-bon box and scattered some sweetmeats on the carpet so that the tiny intruders should have some supper, and I went to sleep without any apprehension. In the middle of the night, however, something disagreeable occurred, and I was awakened by a sharp pain in my ear. I put my hand to my head when a mouse jumped to the floor, and I felt blood trickling on the side of my cheek. I got up and called my maid, and examination showed a bite on my left ear. It bled a good deal, and to-day my ear is much swollen. I shall not put

any bon-hons down to-night,' continued Mdme. Patti, 'and when I sleep in the day time I shall place my maid to act as sentry.'"

The reporter, feeling that he had passed one of the most delightful quarters of an hour in his life, now left the apartment.

When the news got about that Patti had been bitten by a mouse, enterprising makers and patentees of mousetraps approached her from all sides with specimens of their various mouse-catching contrivances. Some of these were very curious. One was prompt and severe in its action, despatching the mouse at the moment of capture by a single cutting blow. Another was apparently the work of some member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Far from killing the mouse, it provided the little creature with a wheel, which, as long as it was allowed to live, it could amuse itself by turning.

About this time two "sensations" occurred. One was connected with Commander Gye, who was leaving the city at an early hour, when he was robbed of his black leather travelling-bag, containing money, pins, rings, Roman coins, cigarette boxes, a cheque-book, a cheque for 4,400 dollars, which I had signed for Mdme. Patti's previous night's salary, with other documents of less value, including Nilsson's broken contract.

The reports of this robbery, as usual, were considerably enlarged, and it afterwards got into cir-

culatation that amongst the things lost were M line. Albani's jewels, worth several thousands of pounds. This cost Captain Gye a deal of inconvenience, for it brought down the Inland Revenue authorities on him. He was accused of having smuggled in the diamonds from abroad, and some considerable time passed before all the excitement subsided.

The other "sensation" was the invasion of the basso Monti's room while he was in bed and the theft of 400 dollars worth of jewellery belonging to him. This, too, caused a deal of talk in the papers.

Our last night was, indeed, a gala night. The most brilliant audience of the whole season filled every corner of the theatre, so great was the curiosity of the public to see Mdme. Patti and Mdme. Scalchi together in the same opera. About five o'clock the crowd outside the Academy was already immense, and it was not until seven that we opened the doors.

The rush was great, and a sad incident now took place. A lady in the crowd who had purchased her ticket beforehand was taken up from the bottom of the staircase to the top, though she died before reaching the first landing from disease of the heart, rendered fatal by the excitement. Borne upwards by the dense crowd she did not fall till she reached the gallery. Fearing the alarm this occurrence might cause, the servants, in order that I should not hear of it, had placed the lady on the

floor of a little top private box, where she remained during the whole of the performance; her body not being removed by her friends until the next morning.

After leaving Philadelphia we visited Chicago, where the advance sale of seats prior to our opening reached the enormous sum of 16,000 dollars.

On the evening of our arrival I received a telegram from Mdme. Albani stating that she would arrive early the following morning. I met her at the station. She was accompanied by her husband, Mr. Ernest Gye, and his brother, Commander Gye. She had just returned from some concerts which I had arranged in Albany and in New York, where she had met with the most enthusiastic reception.

She appeared on the fifth evening of my first week in *I Puritani*, when the cold weather did not deter the holders of tickets from claiming their places in the theatre. At an early hour, and long before the curtain ran up for the first act, there was absolutely not a vacant spot in the theatre. Albani was welcomed with an enthusiasm that even Patti might have been proud of. She was queen in the hearts of all who were present that evening.

On leaving Chicago we went to St. Louis, where our triumphs were again repeated; Mdme. Albani, Mdme. Patti, and Scalchi all contributing to the immense success.

About this time several of my songbirds began to take cold, the weather having suddenly changed.

Mdme. Patti had to remain at home, Mdme. Scalchi took to her bed, as also did Mdme. Fursch-Madi and Mdme. Albani. The duty, therefore, of singing fell to Mdlle. Dotti, who for three nights in succession sustained the prima donna duties, giving much satisfaction under the circumstances.

Patti, however, was able to resume work the following night in *La Traviata*; Mdme. Albani singing "Lohengrin" at the morning performance of the next day, whilst Mdlle. Dotti closed the season by singing "Margherita" in *Faust* the same evening.

I was naturally very anxious about my singers. We had to leave by special train at one o'clock in the morning in order to reach Cincinnati; and as it was now some 40 degrees below freezing point, I left the ballet, chorus, and orchestra to sleep in the railway carriages, which were shunted up a siding. Those who went to the hotel had the greatest difficulty in reaching it.

On ascertaining that nearly every place had been sold for the whole of the Festival week, I entered at once into arrangements for giving two additional nights in the succeeding week, on which I arranged that Patti should sing "Aida" and Albani "Margherita" in *Faust*.

The first performance at the great Festival was *La Traviata*, followed by *L'Africaine*, magnificently placed upon the stage. On the Wednesday afternoon Mdme. Albani appeared as "Amina" in *La*

Sonnambula, and in the evening *William Tell* was given, with Mierzwinski, Galassi, and Dotti. This drew the largest number of people of any night during the week, the great choruses of the Gathering of the Cantons eliciting the loudest expressions of admiration. On the Thursday evening we performed Rossini's *Semiramide*, Patti and Scalchi surpassing themselves. On the following evening Wagner's *Flying Dutchman* was produced, with Ravelli, Galassi, and Albani. The next morning came *Don Giovanni*; with Fursch-Madi as "Donna Anna;" Dotti as "Elvira;" and Patti as "Zerlina." The first week was brought to a fitting close by a splendid performance of *Lohengrin*; Mierzwinski performing the "Knight of the Swan;" Galassi, "Telramund;" Monti, the "King;" Scalchi, "Ortruda;" and Albani, "Elsa."

This Festival, without going into details, surpassed the two preceding ones.

Everyone, I believe, made money. All the spring fashions were introduced in the leading stores of the city, whilst visitors came in from many hundreds of miles. The hotels were crowded, and people were sleeping even in the corridors. The railways were making money, and the cabmen making fortunes, from the high charges they taxed the public with.

The Music Hall was nightly crowded to its utmost limit, there being never less than 7,000 people present; and one representation surpassed the other

till all ended in one great excitement. The newspapers in the city were taken up almost exclusively with the Festival. Nothing was thought of but the Festival, and all business appeared to be suspended. The toilettes of the ladies were something to be remembered.

On February 18, 1882, prior to my leaving Cincinnati, a meeting was held at the Mayor's Office, when my attendance was requested. To my astonishment and delight the highest possible compliment was now paid me; for I was presented with the freedom of the city, which was given to me in a valuable casket, Mayor Means explaining that since the history of the city no similar compliment had been paid even to one of their own citizens, much less to an Englishman. This was followed by a grand banquet at the Club, where, amongst others, I had the honour of making the acquaintance of Mr. Reuben Springer, the donor of the magnificent hall in which the Festival had been held.

I omitted, however, to mention that my friend Abbey was determined, if possible, to injure this Festival, for which purpose he brought Madame Nilsson into the town, and kept her there during the whole of the week, with a Company of artists, who sang at some small theatre. I need hardly say that no harm whatever was done to the receipts, which totalled up to 40,000 dollars more than any of the preceding Festivals had brought.

CHAPTER XX.

GALASSI DISTINGUISHES HIMSELF—POLITENESS OF PRIME
DONNE—ENGLISH WELCOME IN CANADA—CONCERT AT
THE WHITE HOUSE—VALUE OF PATTI'S NOTES—
PHANTOM SHIP WRECKED — NILSSON'S CONTRACT—
PATTI'S CONTRACT—RETURN TO ENGLAND.

THE Company now left for Detroit. Our season opened with Albani as "Lucia;" and for the following night *Semiramide* was announced, with Adelina Patti and Scalchi. Unfortunately Mdme. Patti had taken cold, and was unable to sing. It appeared that on arriving at the station she had had to walk through piles of snow for some distance in order to reach her carriage.

At one time the public threatened to demolish the building, so disappointed were they; especially as Mdme. Patti had also failed to appear in that same city the previous year.

It was at once put down (as these things generally are) to caprice on the part of the prima donna, or a trick on that of the operatic manager. I, there-

fore, at once sought Dr. Brodie, an eminent physician of Detroit, and he furnished a certificate as to the *Diva's* illness.

Despite the change of the bill, a good-sized audience remained for Verdi's tragic opera of *Il Trovatore*.

On the closing night we performed *Guillaume Tell*, in which Signor Galassi particularly distinguished himself. According to one of the journals, which appeared the following morning, so dexterously did he shoot the apple off his son's head that he might always be sure of a warm welcome whenever he returned to that city.

Rival prime donne—those, at least, who have the habits of polite society—are very particular in calling on one another, though these visits are sometimes of a highly formal kind. During my American season of 1883 I was associated with Mr. Gye; and it so happened that Nicolini and Patti, Ernest Gye and Albani (Mrs. Ernest Gye) were staying at Detroit in the same hotel where I also had put up. Patti and Nicolini having just gone for a drive, Madame Albani, seeing them pass beneath her window, called out to her husband—

“Ernest, they have gone out. We had better leave cards on them at once.”

On returning home Madame Patti duly received the cards; and an hour or two afterwards, when Albani and Mr. Gye had just gone to the theatre, where there was to be a rehearsal, said to Nicolini—

“Ernest” (his name, also, was Ernest), “they have gone to the theatre. Now is the time for returning their visit.”

As Madame Patti was still suffering from a very severe cold, I thought it prudent to leave her behind at Detroit, for the purpose not only of re-establishing herself, but of assuring the public that she was really ill. She remained there some four or five days after we had left.

The whole Company, except Madame Patti, had to muster at the station about 2 a.m. to start for Canada. By some mismanagement on the part of the railway company, there being two competing lines, with but one set of rails running into the joint station, the artists were kept waiting at this station for over a couple of hours, the wind bitterly cold, and the thermometer some fifty degrees below freezing point. At length, to the joy of all, our special was drawn up alongside the platform, and we were enabled to make a start, arriving at Toronto the following afternoon.

The next morning the musicians all came to me in great despair, the Canadian Custom House authorities having seized the whole of their instruments as liable to duty. The same difficulty occurred with the wardrobes and properties; and it was not until very late in the day, by going through a course of red-tape, which reminded one of the old country, that they could be released, I giving an undertaking that the troupe should leave Canada within two days.

A right royal English welcome did our Company receive there. Prior to the performance I requested Arditi to play the National Anthem. The whole of the audience stood up, and, on its conclusion, gave three hearty cheers. Nearly all the private box, dress circle, and stall ticket-holders arrived in open sleighs, the snow being very thick.

The opening performance was *Il Trovatore*, in which Mierzwinski, Galassi, Scalchi, and Fursch-Madi appeared, giving great satisfaction. The excellence of the representation was quite a revelation to the public, as it were.

On the following night Madame Albani appeared as "Lucia," when the *parquette*, balconies, and boxes were crowded with the *élite* of the city, the Lieutenant-Governor occupying the gubernatorial box.

The galleries were likewise crowded to their fullest capacity, standing room even being at a premium. Albani was welcomed with vociferous cheers, and her performance throughout received the warmest approbation.

Immediately after the conclusion of our grand two-night season in Canada our special train was put in motion towards Buffalo, where we performed the following evening, leaving again after the performance at 2 a.m. for Pittsburg, at which place Mdme. Patti had arrived the previous day.

At Pittsburg the season opened most auspiciously

with *La Traviata*. The theatre itself was not only crowded to the ceiling, but we charged five dollars a head for standing room on the window sills.

The following night Mdme. Albani appeared as "Margherita" in *Faust*, supported by Ravelli, Scalchi, etc.

A *matinée* was given the next day of *Il Trovatore*, followed by a splendid performance the same evening of *William Tell*. On each occasion the house was crammed.

The Company had again to muster at 2 a.m. after the performance to start for Washington, at which place we arrived the following evening, Mdme. Albani opening the next day as "Margherita" in *Faust*.

The next evening I had to change the performance, *la Diva* having contracted a sore throat during the journey. I substituted *William Tell*, postponing Mdme. Patti's *début* until the following night, when she and Scalchi captivated the audience with *Semiramide*. In a letter to the papers the following morning a mathematician stated that by carefully counting the notes in the part of *Semiramide*, and dividing the result by the sum paid nightly to Patti for singing that part, he discovered that she received exactly $42\frac{5}{8}$ cents for each of the notes that issued from her throat. This was found to be just $7\frac{1}{10}$ cents per note more than Rossini got for writing the whole opera.

On the following Friday President Arthur gave a

private concert at the White House. I here append the programme:—

PART I.

- Duetto—"Sull'aria" (Nozze di Figaro) . . . *Mozart.*
 Mdme. Fursch-Madi and Mdlle. Dotti.
 Romanza—"Angelo Casto" (Duca d'Alba) posthumous opera
 by *Donizetti*. Signor Frapolli.
 Cavatina—"Tacea la notte (Trovatore) . . . *Verdi.*
 Mdme. Fursch-Madi.
 Aria Buffa—"Miei rampolli (Cenerentola) . . . *Rossini.*
 Signor Corsini.
 Air—"Voi che sapete (Nozze di Figaro) . . . *Mozart.*
 Mdlle. Dotti.

—
 An Interval of Half an Hour.

PART II.

- Trio—"Qual Volutta (Lombardi) . . . *Verdi.*
 Mdme. Fursch-Madi, Signor Frapolli, and Signor Galassi.
 Cavatina—"Nobil Signor" (Huguenots) . . . *Meyerbeer.*
 Mdme. Scalchi.
 Romanza—"O tu bel astro (Tannhäuser) . . . *Wagner.*
 Signor Galassi.
 a { Air—"Pur dicesti" . . . *Lotti.*
 b { Song—"Robin Adair" . . . —
 Madame Albani.

The White House,

February 23, 1883.

At the conclusion of the concert a splendid supper was served in the banqueting hall. As I had to attend upon no less than five ladies, the President observed at the close of the feast that I had had nothing to eat myself. He, therefore, gave orders that on the departure of the guests another supper should be served, at which he occupied the chair.

The repast was really of the first order. It was interspersed with excellent Veuve Clicquot, and the President afterwards ordered in cigars and related to me some most interesting anecdotes of his earlier career. He also gave me an account of the alarm felt at New York when one Sunday the *Merrimac* was expected to come up the bay in order to levy contributions on the city; there being no powder in the forts and but few cannon balls, all of the wrong calibre. Fortunately she met the *Monitor*, who soon gave a good account of her.

We gave a grand *matinée* the following day, with Patti as "La Traviata," when people paid even for standing in the passages, where they could only occasionally hear sounds.

At the close of the morning performance our special train started for Boston, where we arrived late the next day.

Here further calculations were made in the daily papers as to the value of Patti's notes, *Semiramide* showing 30 cents. for every note she sang, whilst in "Lucia" the rate of $42\frac{1}{2}$ cents. per note was reached.

We afterwards performed *Faust* with Albani, and some of the grand operas, such as *L'Africaine*, *Les Huguenots*, *Lohengrin*, and *Aida*. Towards the close of our engagement Wagner's *Flying Dutchman* was given for the first time on the Italian stage at Boston.

A rather startling event occurred during the first act on the arrival of the Phantom Ship, which, after

sweeping gracefully round, broadside to the audience, suddenly capsized, casting the Dutchman and his crew promiscuously on to the stage, the masts going straight across the occupants of the stalls and the sails covering Arditì, who was then at the desk.

At this juncture loud screams were heard. They came from the wife of the principal baritone, who, witnessing the accident, had fears for her husband's safety. The choristers, who were thrown pell-mell into the water, and on to their stomachs, began with a great deal of tact to strike out as if swimming, until—as soon as possible—the curtain was lowered. The ship was soon set on its keel again, but nothing could induce Galassi to board the vessel.

At the close of the Boston engagement, which was highly successful, we returned to New York, where we remained some five weeks, performing a different opera almost nightly.

About this time I learned that the Washington and Lee University for promoting higher education in the South was in great need of funds. I, therefore, notified General Lilly, of Virginia, who had been interested in that institution for years, my willingness to assist by giving a miscellaneous performance for that purpose. A committee of distinguished ladies was formed to superintend the distribution of the tickets, including Mrs. General Dix, Mrs. Franklin Edson, Mrs. August Belmont, Mrs. G. Rives, Mrs. Livingstone, Mrs. Jay, Mrs.

Pierre Lorillard, Mrs. Frederick Kernochan, Mrs. Henry Clewes, Mrs. Pryor, Mrs. General Hancock, Mrs. Barton French, Mrs. W. C. Whitney, Mrs. Vanderbilt, Baroness de Thomsen, Mrs. Bowdoin, Mrs. Alonzo B. Cornell, Mrs. Benjamin Willis, Mrs. F. B. Thurber, etc., etc.

The appearance of the Academy, on this occasion filled by a most brilliant audience, was a thing long to be remembered. The evening commenced with an act of *Trovatore*, which was followed by the appearance of Mdme. Albani in the first act of *Norma*. A more beautiful rendering of the lovely cavatina "Casta Diva" could not have been heard, Mdme. Albani's vocalization being really the perfection of art. She was recalled several times, and covered with flowers. An act from Meyerbeer's *Dinorah* came next, with Mdme. Patti and Scalchi. Both left the stage loaded with flowers, Patti coming forward at the close and afterwards good-naturedly singing in front of the drop curtain "Home, sweet Home."

A scene then followed not put down in the programme, in the shape of a presentation to myself of two large and handsome silk flags, one English and the other American, the gift of the ladies of the committee; each of the white stars on the blue ground of the American flag having been inserted by a member of this committee.

I thanked the ladies in a grateful speech, shouldered my lofty flags, and left the stage amidst

loud cheering. The receipts amounted to some £1,800. About a fortnight afterwards I was informed by General Lilley that a chair of English literature had been established at the University bearing my name.

The following Saturday morning *La Traviata* was again given, the house being even more crowded than usual. The bank having closed prior to the termination of the performance, the monies were all placed in the iron safe.

Early the following morning I was informed that one of the doors leading to the treasury had been forced open, the floor of which was strewn with tickets and furniture. Worse still, the iron safe had been opened and rifled of its contents; over 21,500 dollars having been carried off. Fortunately this amount was for the most part in cheques, which I succeeded in stopping at the bank; but the loss in hard cash exceeded £1,600.

About this time further rumours were in circulation as to Mr. Abbey trying to take away several of my best singers, notably both Patti and Galassi.

During the New York season I sent Mdme. Albani to sing in a concert at Montreal, the railway directors providing a special car for her. On her arrival she was received by the Mayor and Aldermen of the city; also by a guard of honour of 200 men in uniform, besides the members of four snow-shoe clubs in their beautiful and picturesque costumes.

A reception was afterwards held at the Hôtel de

Ville, when a formal address was handed to Mdme. Albani on a beautifully illuminated scroll. All the tickets being instantly sold out, two more concerts had to be given; and Mdme. Albani returned to New York in time to sing the following Friday, having netted for the treasury 16,000 dollars by her three days' visit to Montreal.

Shortly afterwards I gave a combined performance for the benefit of the New York Exchange for Woman's Work. Again I had a ladies' committee to work with, including the charming Mrs. F. B. Thurber, who acted as secretary, the president being Mrs. W. G. Choate, while the vice-presidents consisted of some forty leading ladies of New York. The entertainment consisted of a concert in which Mdme. Adelina Patti, Mdme. Albani, Mdme. Scalchi, Nicolini, and others of the Company appeared.

I append the programme, in which will be found several features of interest, including, in particular, the singing of Mozart's delightful duet by Patti and Albani.

PART I.

| | | |
|--|-----------------|-------------------|
| Overture—"Egmont" | | <i>Beethoven</i> |
| | Orchestra. | |
| Romanza—"O lieti, di" (Etoile du Nord) | . . . | <i>Meyerbeer</i> |
| | Monsieur Durat. | |
| Aria—"Nobil Signor" (Huguenots) | . . . | <i>Meyerbeer</i> |
| | Madame Scalchi. | |
| Ballade et Polonaise. | | <i>Vieuxtemps</i> |
| | Herr Brandt. | |
| Cavatina—"Qui la voce" (Puritani) | . . . | <i>Bellini</i> |
| | Madame Albani. | |

| | | |
|---|--|-----------------|
| Romanza—"Vien, vien m'e noto" (Velleda) | Signor Nicolini. | <i>Lenepveu</i> |
| Valse—"Nell' ebrezza" (Romeo e Giulietta) | Madame Adelina Patti. | <i>Gounod</i> |
| Ballet, Silvia | Orchestra. | <i>Delibes</i> |
| PART II. | | |
| L'invitation a la Valse | Orchestra. | <i>Weber</i> |
| Ballade—"Ouvre ta porte" | Signor Ravelli. | <i>Grieg</i> |
| Hungarian Fantaisie | (With orchestra) Herr Rafael Joseffy. | <i>Liszt</i> |
| Duetto, "Sull aria" (Nozze di Figaro) | Madame Adelina Patti and Madame Albani. | <i>Mozart</i> |
| Gavotte—"In veder l'amata stanza" (Mignon). | Madame Scalchi. | <i>Thomas</i> |
| Romanza—"M'appari" (Martha) | Signor Ravelli. | <i>Flotow</i> |
| Rakoczy March | Orchestra. | <i>Berlioz</i> |

After the concert the ladies presented me on the stage with a magnificent gold badge, bearing the English arms on one side, surmounted with diamonds and rubies, and the American arms on the other; also an elegant walking cane with a massive gold top, crowned by a very large uncut sapphire of great value.

The next morning Mr. Gye came to me with the alarming intelligence that the lease of the new Metropolitan Opera-house had been given to Mr. Abbey. He complained bitterly of the treatment he had received at the hands of its Directors

after the trouble he had taken in furnishing them with the interior plans and workings of Covent Garden Theatre, in order to assist the architect to get as complete a building as possible. He had been negotiating with the Directors on behalf of the Royal Italian Opera Company, Covent Garden, Limited, and, in fact, those negotiations had never been broken off. He was still awaiting an answer from the Committee, to whom the matter had been referred.

Mr. Abbey having announced that he would open the New Metropolitan Opera-house with Madame Nilsson, Mr. Gye informed me that she was under contract to sing with our Company, and showed me the following engagement :—

“London, 2nd May, 1882.

“Madame Christine Nilsson agrees to accept an engagement with Mr. Gye to sing either for him or for the Royal Italian Opera Company, Limited, in London, during the season of 1883, at a salary of £200 per night. Madame Nilsson also agrees to accept an engagement for America for the season of 1883-1884, for fifty or sixty representations, operas, concerts, or oratorios, at a salary of £300 per night, this to include all hotel expenses, but not travelling. Madame Nilsson agrees also to sing for five or six nights at Covent Garden during next July, the *répertoire* for Madame Nilsson being *Mignon*, *Lohengrin*, *Don Giovanni*, *Mefistofele*, and *Faust* if

possible, which Mr. Gye agrees to do his best to obtain for her in London, 1883, and in America, her *répertoire* to be the same, and other operas by common consent. No opera is to belong to Madame Nilsson exclusively, except one opera that she may create, and that for one season. Should Madame Nilsson wish to remain in America in the summer of 1884 she is to be at liberty to do so, and should she wish to return to England, Mr. Gye engages himself for her to sing in London during the London season on the same conditions. Mr. Gye binds himself to accept the engagement now in preparation.

“(Signed) CHRISTINE NILSSON ROUZAUD.”

Despite this, however, Madame Nilsson signed with Mr. Abbey, receiving a sum considerably in excess of the one stipulated for in the Gye engagement.

In the meantime further rumours were getting circulated with regard to Mr. Abbey's *razzia* on my singers, and the daily papers were full of our disputes and recriminations; with which I will not trouble the reader just now. On the conclusion of our New York season we again returned to Philadelphia, in consequence of the success of our previous visit, opening there with the *Flying Dutchman*. The next night *l'Etoile du Nord* was performed with the peerless Adelina, followed by *Lohengrin* with the charming “Elsa” of Albani. Thus we continued our triumphant career.

Mr. Abbey had begun his intrigues with Campanini, to whom he offered 1,000 dollars (£200) a night. He now proposed a similar amount to Scalchi and a considerable sum to Valleria, whilst his *employés* were hard at work round the stage-door taking away my choruses, wardrobe keepers, and even the stage-manager. All my people, in short, were offered three or four times their usual salaries, merely for the sake of injuring me, without Mr. Abbey's benefiting himself in any way. I described him, to an interviewer, as a *guastomestiere*; a word which sorely puzzled him, and caused him to consult his solicitor.

I now endeavoured to make sure of Patti, and she eventually consented to make a small reduction in her terms and to accept 4,000 dollars a night.

In due course her contract had been prepared by her agent and a day fixed for executing it, which happened to be a Thursday. Being much occupied that day at the theatre in consequence of troubles of various sorts I found it too late to get up to Mdme. Patti's hotel, but went the following morning early. Nicolini explained to me that Mdme. Patti never did anything on a Friday, and that I had better call the next day. The day afterwards he informed me that, soon after I had left, Mr. Abbey had come to Mdme. Patti saying that he could offer her a minimum of 5,000 dollars (£1,000) a night, payment to be made on the morning of each per-

formance, and 50,000 deposited in the bank as payment for the last ten nights of the engagement, and that Mr. W. H. Vanderbilt would sign the contract and give her the requisite guarantees.

This was not the only inducement he offered her if she would link her fortunes with the new Metropolitan Opera-house the following season. She was further to have a special private drawing-room and sleeping car, the like of which had never yet been run on rails, to be specially built for her, fitted with a conservatory, fernery, &c.

There was no reason, however, why these propositions should interfere with the formal acceptance of a contract already drawn up and verbally agreed to. The next day, then, about 11 o'clock, I was going in joyously to sign my contract when I was met by Signor Nicolini at the door, who told me that a very dreadful thing had happened since he last saw me. On my inquiring what it was he informed me that Mr. Abbey's visit had quite upset Mdme. Patti, who was ill in her room. She had not even spoken to the parrot, which was a sad sign. He then communicated to me Mr. Abbey's proposition, as above.

Nicolini, however, assured me that Mdme. Patti held me in the highest esteem, and would on no account throw me over, considering that my engagement with her would be just as good as Mr. Vanderbilt's. If I would call later in the day, after luncheon, he hoped to get the matter concluded.

He, at the same time, gave me to understand that no reduction could be made in the terms which had been offered by Vanderbilt through Abbey.

On leaving I at once consulted with Mr. Gye, the General Manager of the Royal Italian Opera Company, Covent Garden, Limited, and he fully agreed with me that there was no alternative but to accede to the terms, the sum demanded being but a trifle more than Patti had been receiving throughout the season then about to close. Gye telegraphed the particulars to his London Directors.

I accordingly went round in the afternoon and signed the contract. The visit of Mr. Abbey to Mdme. Patti on the previous day had meanwhile caused a rise of no less than 50,000 dollars (£10,000) in her demands.

Next day Mdme. Patti sailed for Europe on the *Arizona*, Signor Franchi, her agent, remaining behind to complete the details of the new engagement.

About this time Mdme. Cavalazzi, my daughter-in-law, informed me that she had had an offer from Abbey's agent of double the amount I was paying her. I at once told her to accept it, and that I would keep her place open for her, when she could return the following season, by which time Abbey would be closed up. The following season she duly returned, Mr. Abbey, as I shall afterwards relate, having duly come to grief.

Prior to my departure I was entertained by a number of my friends and supporters at the Manhattan

Club. The dinner was arranged partly as a farewell to me and partly in acknowledgment of the aid I had given to young American artists essaying an operatic career. Judge J. R. Brady presided, and the company included the Mayor Edson, the Reverend Dr. Hoffman, Recorder Smyth, Judge Abraham R. Lawrence, Chief Justice Noah Davis, Judge W. H. Arnoux, the British Consul General Booker, Chief Justice C. P. Daly, General de Cesnola, Chief Justice Shea, General Stewart L. Woodford, General Hancock, Commissioner J. S. Coleman, Mr. John H. Starin, Mr. F. B. Thurber, Mr. Aaron Vanderpoel, Professor Henry Drisler, Mr. Wm. Steinway, the Reverend Professor Seabury, Professor A. Charlier, Mr. Oscar S. Strauss, and many others.

On the removal of the cloth Judge Brady gave the toast, "The guest of the evening," to which I replied. Other toasts followed, and the entertainment passed off merrily enough. Signor Clodio, Signor Ravelli, and Signor Ronconi came in with the cigars, and pleasantly varied the latter portion of the evening by a choice selection of operatic arias.

At the close of the entertainment it was unanimously resolved to charter a special steamer to accompany me the following morning down the bay conveying those who were present at the dinner. Mr. Starin, who was sitting at the table, offered to place one of his magnificent steamers at their disposal, which was to leave Pier 41, North River, at a quarter to nine the following morning. After singing

“ Auld Lang Syne ” and “ He’s a jolly good fellow ” the company separated. Just prior to my departure the following morning my friends appeared on the chartered steamer, which followed us down the bay with a band of music, accompanied by hearty cheers until we were out of sight.

END OF VOL. 7.



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